

OpenDoors NEWSLETTER

Persecuted  But never alone.

FIND YOUR 2020
WWL PRAYER
MAP INSIDE

WORLD WATCH LIST

2020

**MARCH/
APRIL 2020**

Despite rising danger, you help believers say: *"We're not alone. God is with us."* p. 2
Former Muslims now stand strong for Christ, thanks to you! p. 3 | From Jan's
perspective, p. 4 | What you need to know from the 2020 World Watch List, p. 5



Despite rising danger, you help believers say:

“We’re not alone. God is with us.”

Today, over 260 million Christians in the world experience at least “high” levels of persecution for their faith. And the new 2020 World Watch List shows why your support is so vital – because the number of believers being impacted in new ways is increasing.

Violent Islamic militants have gained ground in sub-Saharan Africa, and they’ve sparked violence such as the suicide bombings in Sri Lanka last year. Vijitha, a member of one of the churches in Sri Lanka that was attacked, says:

“After the bomb blast... whenever big noises come, [my daughter] screams. She’s still very scared because she saw [the] dead bodies of her friends.”

Due to the spread of Islamic militancy, Burkina Faso has jumped 33 places up to #28 on the World Watch List.

Christians in Burkina Faso say they’re now in a fight for survival. Last year, Islamic jihadists who see themselves in a holy war, or spiritual “struggle” (jihad), carried out numerous attacks against Christians. An Open Doors partner there says:

“[Christians]... are just part of a programme by the jihadists who deliberately sow terror, assassinating members of the Christian communities and forcing [those] remaining to flee.”


Another alarming trend is that persecution

is going high tech, with biometric technology and artificial intelligence. This is being used to monitor citizens in authoritarian states like China (#23 on the World Watch List). Pastor Jin* who was detained then released by the Chinese government three years ago, reports:

“I found myself under close monitoring. By 2018 the government was rolling out its countrywide surveillance system using millions of cameras and facial recognition software. I was on their database and ‘recognisable’ if I passed one of their cameras... Basically, I had become ‘traceable’ like a vegetable in the supermarket. The only thing missing was the barcode!”

But in the face of all this, there is good news – and you help make that possible!

Even though persecution continues to increase around the world, we hear *miraculous testimonies of people coming to Christ in some of the darkest places on earth.* They’re choosing Christ despite the costs. And thanks to you reaching out to them through Open Doors, more believers are getting the support they need to follow Christ. As Imeldo, a believer in Latin America, says:

“We know that we aren’t alone. First, God is with us. And also, Open Doors. God abundantly blesses Open Doors and all who work and are integrated into this ministry. Thank God for [their] support. God bless Open Doors.” 

*Name changed for security purposes.

Former Muslims now stand strong for Christ, thanks to you!

Abdul is a tailor and a follower of Christ from a Muslim background who soldiers on in Cameroon. For the first time, his nation has hit the World Watch List at #48 – as Muslim radicalisation grows around him.

He along with other Christians are trying to make a living and live out their mission of glorifying Christ under difficult circumstances.

Abdul has endured many difficulties for his faith, including his wife divorcing him and trying to alienate him from his seven children. Eventually the constant pressure forced him to leave his hometown.

In his new town, he finally found a place to resume his tailoring business. And thanks to your support, he started training five others in tailoring. Three of those are Believers from a Muslim Background – and as they sew together, Abdul sows life and truth into their hearts by helping to disciple them in their walk with Christ as well.

You also helped Danki, another believer discipled by Abdul, to open his own barbershop to support his family. Danki says with a big smile:

"May God bless all those who supported me to open this shop. They've respected the Bible by loving their neighbour. Each time I look at this, at me today, it is like a dream."

Thank you for helping bring refreshment, hope and resilience to these believers in the face of persecution.



FROM JAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Dear partner of the persecuted Church

Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List shows that persecution continues to rise against our brothers and sisters. When looking at this year's list and reading what they're facing, one wants to call out "How long, Lord?" (Psalm 13:1). How long will they suffer; how long will the Evil One triumph over them?

On our very own continent of Africa, Christians are facing all sorts of atrocities for the name of our Lord as seen in Somalia (#3), Libya (#4), Eritrea (#6), Sudan (#7), Nigeria (#12), Egypt (#16), Burkina Faso (#28) and many other African countries where Christians are being heavily targeted by Islamic extremists.

If we look abroad, we see that in places like Iraq there's been an 87% reduction of Christians within one generation. And in India there has been at least 447 verified incidents of violence and hate crimes against Christians.

Even though the situation looks bleak, we praise the Lord that we and our persecuted family do not need to be afraid because our God goes with us and fights for us, as Deuteronomy 20:4 says...

"For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

May God bless you as you continue to be a source of strength and encouragement to your persecuted brothers and sisters. Your ongoing prayers and support assure them that they're not alone!

Thank you for being God's hands and feet to those risking everything to serve and worship Him in closed countries!

Together in His service,



Jan Gouws
Executive Director
Open Doors Southern Africa



From this month you'll receive your newsletter and two prayer calendars every second month.

P.O. Box 1771, Cresta, 2118

T +27 11 888 9341

F +27 11 888 9362

E southafrica@od.org

I www.opendoors.org.za



Open Doors South Africa

Bank Accounts: South Africa, **Geopende Deure - Open Doors, ABSA - Northcliff (632005), Acc. no. 160340568**
Geopende Deure - Open Doors, Nedbank Business Account (198765), Acc. no. 113 750 4552

Bank Account: Namibia, **Open Doors Namibia, Nedbank - Windhoek (461609), Acc. no. 1-2000-23847-1**
(Please fax proof of payment to: +27 11 888 9362)

All information compiled by Open Doors Southern Africa and correct at time of printing. No reproduction without permission.

Contact Milandr  at milandre@od.org

REG # 2004/023397/08 | Printing done by Resolution Litho