

What you need to know from the 2022 WORLD WATCH LIST

In total more than **360 million** Christians suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith.

On Open Doors' World Watch List top 50 alone, **312 million** Christians face very high or extreme levels.

THE LATEST TRENDS

Globally, Taliban takeover boosts jihadists' belief in eventual success

The Taliban's takeover of government in Afghanistan (1) gave jihadists globally a profound psychological boost. In neighbouring Pakistan, the Taliban strengthened as Islamist groups celebrated. Across Africa, jihadists see it as a matter of time before the foreign forces fighting against them leave.

Other countries notably affected are Nigeria (7), Central African Republic (31), Burkina Faso (32), Niger (33), Democratic Republic of Congo (40), Mozambique (41) and Cameroon (44).

Global Church increasingly "displaced" or "refugee" – adding to vulnerability

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says about 84 million people were forcibly displaced in 2021 within their own country, with 26 million across borders. Many of them are Christians fleeing persecution. Hundreds of thousands are affected by Islamist violence. The vast majority of Christians affected by this violence remain in their region, displaced in-country or as refugees.

Countries notably affected are Eritrea (6), Iran (9), Myanmar (12), Sudan (13), Iraq (14), Syria (15) and Jordan (39).

China's model of control of religion leads the world

As China's (17) economic prowess and influence grows, so has nationalism, requiring social stability, enforced from above with "orders", rather than by choice, freedom of speech or of other belief systems.

Under Communist ideology in the Americas, the pandemic continued to be used as a pretext to surveil churches and impose greater restrictions i.e. in Cuba (37), in July, Christian leaders who spoke out for social justice were detained, tortured and fined excessively. This has been emulated in other countries like Sri Lanka, and the Central Asian states with increased restrictions on dissenters.

Other countries notably affected are Myanmar (12) and Malaysia (50).

Covid restrictions still used by authoritarian governments and criminal gangs continue to weaken the Church

The pandemic appeared to provide "proof of concept" that digital surveillance worked sufficiently in China and is now in demand globally, particularly by other authoritarian governments. As the WWL reported last year, from West Africa to Central America, governments' focus on fighting the pandemic enabled jihadist and organised criminal groups to further consolidate and expand their power and territorial control.

 **OpenDoors**

www.opendoors.org.za/wwl



Top 5 countries with the most violent persecution

- 1** Nigeria
- 2** Pakistan
- 3** India
- 4** Central African Republic
- 5** Democratic Republic of Congo

Persecuted  But never alone.

Fast Facts on new #1: Afghanistan

- Afghanistan tops the WWL for the first time ever since the WWL was started.
- Afghanistan has not known peace for more than forty years.
- "Officially" there are no Christians apart from some international military staff, diplomats and NGO workers, with Christianity being pushed underground completely.
- Groups who care for social development and issues concerning women, minorities or human rights are targets for attack.

Situation in #2: North Korea

North Korea reached its highest level of persecution, yet dropped to the #2 country on the 2022 WWL. This is because the situation in Afghanistan has gotten worse. Please continue to pray for North Korean secret believers, who are risking everything to follow Jesus amid unrelenting pressure and persecution.



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The Good News

The Pope's visit to Iraq's region desecrated by Islamic State was generally seen as a success; it encouraged more Christians to consider returning to the country to rebuild.

As persecution continues to increase, THANK YOU for being a beacon of hope for our family of faith through your prayers and support!

You help to equip and encourage them so they can continue to be a light for Christ in their countries.

WORLD WATCH LIST 2022

Open Doors' vision is that no Christian suffers persecution alone.



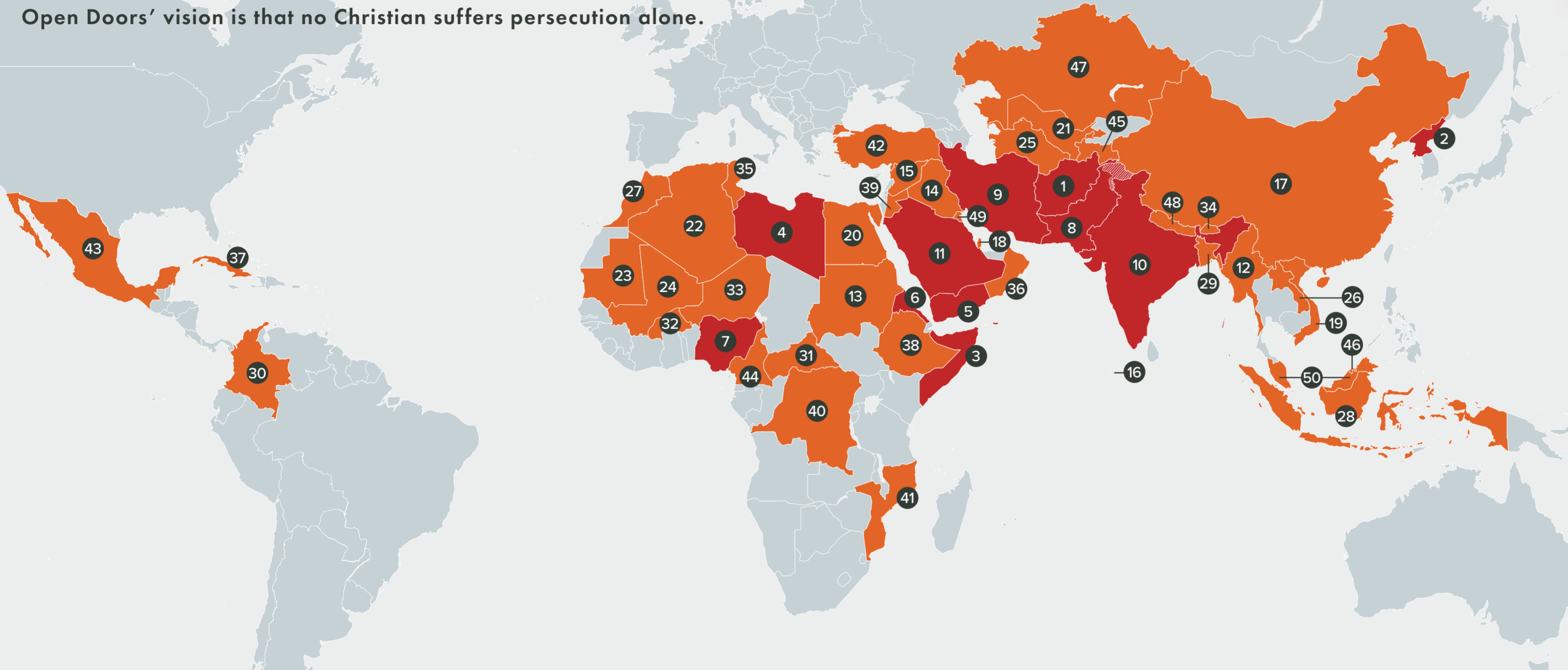
PRAYER MAP

Prayer has always been the number one request from our persecuted family of faith. More and more, they're coming under fire for their faith, and with that, a greater need for prayer.

We can praise God that, even though persecution makes way for violence and discrimination against Christians, it also makes way for the Gospel to advance.

So join us by using this prayer map to pray for our family of faith in the top 50 countries of Christian persecution to be used mightily by God for the advancement of the Gospel amid all they endure.

Visit www.OpenDoors.org.za for more about Christian persecution.



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|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Afghanistan | 11 Saudi Arabia | 21 Uzbekistan | 31 Central African Republic | 41 Mozambique |
| 2 North Korea | 12 Myanmar | 22 Algeria | 32 Burkina Faso | 42 Turkey |
| 3 Somalia | 13 Sudan | 23 Mauritania | 33 Niger | 43 Mexico |
| 4 Libya | 14 Iraq | 24 Mali | 34 Bhutan | 44 Cameroon |
| 5 Yemen | 15 Syria | 25 Turkmenistan | 35 Tunisia | 45 Tajikistan |
| 6 Eritrea | 16 Maldives | 26 Laos | 36 Oman | 46 Brunei |
| 7 Nigeria | 17 China | 27 Morocco | 37 Cuba | 47 Kazakhstan |
| 8 Pakistan | 18 Qatar | 28 Indonesia | 38 Ethiopia | 48 Nepal |
| 9 Iran | 19 Vietnam | 29 Bangladesh | 39 Jordan | 49 Kuwait |
| 10 India | 20 Egypt | 30 Colombia | 40 Congo DR. | 50 Malaysia |

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America is one of the most violent regions in the world due to the high levels of crime and execution killings in some of its countries. Christians are vulnerable as they're seen as a threat to the activities of various criminal groups. Pray for the protection of Christians as they proclaim the Gospel despite the dangers.

ARABIAN PENINSULA

With no public churches for Arabian Peninsula nationals, there are few ways believers in the region can connect with other Christians. Pray that strong and mature Christian communities will spread over the Peninsula and that God will add more to His Church.

MIDDLE EAST

Life is increasingly difficult for Christians living in the Middle East. Conflict continues, and millions of people from Iraq and Syria have been forced to flee their homes due to war and persecution. Pray that the war in the Middle East will end and that God will use His children to be a constant light in the region.

ASIA

Views held by the three main religions in the region (Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam) about Christianity have cast Christians in a bad light and with it fear, hatred and persecution toward Christians. In many of these countries, Christians are isolated because of their faith. Pray for wisdom for Christians to be salt and light in the region despite how people may view them.

AFRICA

Each day reports surface about attacks by Islamic extremist groups and how governments are becoming increasingly hostile toward Christians. Dictators and authoritarian regimes try to stamp out anyone whose allegiance isn't to the government. Pray that God will protect believers from the increasing hostility and that the Gospel will spread as governments try to wipe it out.

PERSECUTION LEVELS

- HIGH
- VERY HIGH
- EXTREME

The Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) is released every January and ranks the top 50 countries where Christians face the worst forms of persecution. Persecution is defined as any hostility experienced because of one's identification with Christ. The WWL takes into account all spheres of life and incidents of violence. The methods for arriving at country scores and their transnational comparison have been independently audited by the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) and their proper application checked in some sample countries. Additional statements and interpretations by Open Doors based on or associated with the publication of the WWL remain outside the scope of this audit. Reporting period: 1 October 2020 – 30 September 2021.

For interactive map:

