

The Persecuted Church

1 in 9 Christians experience high levels of persecution worldwide.



www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution

Every year, the agency Open Doors publishes the World Watch List, a report of the 50 countries that are the harshest persecutors of Christians. Here are the ten worst:

1. *North Korea*: If Christians are discovered, not only are they deported to labor camps as political criminals or even killed on the spot, their families will share their fate as well.
2. *Afghanistan*: All Afghan Christians are converts from Islam and are not able to live their faith openly. Very often, there is only one possible outcome for exposed and caught Christians: They will be killed.
3. *Somalia*: If Somalis are suspected of being converts, family members and clan leaders will harass, intimidate and even kill them.
4. *Libya*: Libyan Christians with a Muslim background face extremely violent and intense pressure from their family and the wider community to renounce their faith.
5. *Pakistan*: All Christians suffer from institutionalized discrimination... The country's notorious blasphemy laws target religious minorities (including Muslim minorities), but affect the Christian minority in particular.
6. *Sudan*: Christians face constant discrimi-

nation and pressure.

7. *Eritrea*: Extreme pressure and state-sanctioned violence are forcing some Christians to flee Eritrea - often called 'Africa's North Korea' - and seek asylum.

8. *Yemen*: The ongoing civil war in Yemen has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent memory.

9. *Iran*: Converts from Islam to Christianity bear the brunt of Christian persecution, especially by the government.

10. *India*: Since the current ruling party took power in 2014, attacks have increased, and Hindu radicals believe they can attack Christians with no consequences. As a result, Christians have been targeted by Hindu nationalist extremists more and more each year.

The International Days of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (www.idop.org), call Christians around the world to unite in the first Sundays of November by praying for our brothers and sisters who suffer for their faith.

Pray for endurance for our brothers and sisters and pray that persecution will be self-defeating and lead to the advance of the Kingdom of God.

THE NATIONS

SRI LANKA



This beautiful tropical country of 21 million people in South Asia is home to majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil communities. The end of a 26-year civil conflict in 2009 was an answer to prayer. Recriminations, rebuilding and political power-struggles continue.

The Christian community is about 8% of the population, mostly Catholic, and declining. More than 250 people were killed by Islamic suicide bombers who targeted Catholic churches and hotels in 2019. The churches have also suffered at the hands of Buddhist extremists in the past few years. Evangelicals are growing.

- Pray for a return to the tolerance and non-violence for which Sri Lanka used to be famous.
- Pray that the Church will lead the way in peace-making and forgiveness and grow numerically and in unity and maturity.

SOUTH SUDAN



The East African state of South Sudan (13 million people) is the world's newest country, born in 2011 when the mostly African and Christian southern provinces gained independence from the Arab north. Long neglected, the new nation has not thrived. South Sudan is poor, trapped in a past of subsistence agriculture and mud huts. It had just 30 miles of paved roads at independence. Civil war followed independence. In 2019 half the population needed food aid. South Sudan is about the worst place in the world for child health, maternal deaths, primary school enrolment, and access to safe drinking water. The notable oil wealth of the nation is not having the hoped-for transformative effect on the infrastructure and well-being of South Sudan.

- The Church has a strong presence in all ethnic communities and is working to reconcile warring ethnic groups and end violence against women which is endemic. Pray for the healing and building of the nation. Pray for dedicated church workers who can be salt and light in the nation.

Praying for the World is a free weekly prayer guide to inspire and inform the whole church to pray for the whole world. Visit www.lausanne.org/pray to start any week. Created through the partnership of Operation World and the Lausanne Movement.