

# 2nd Opinion: Persecution of Christians is rising globally, but does the West really care?

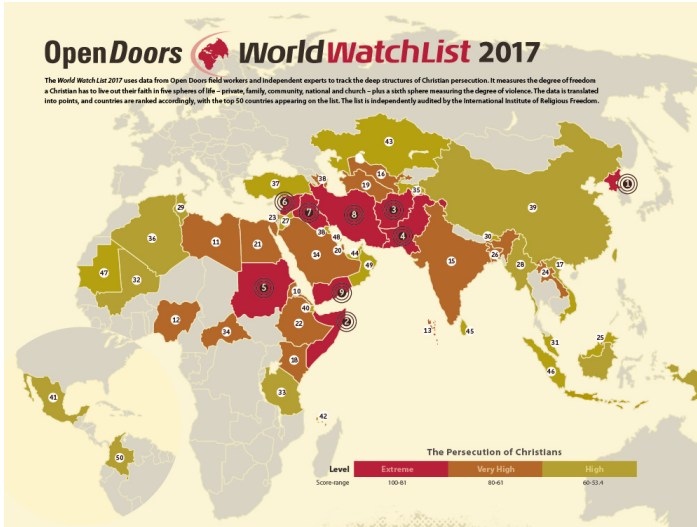
February 8, 2017

One in 12 Christians worldwide suffers some form of persecution, according to the newly released [2017 World Watch List](#) published by [Open Doors](#). The organization, which is a U.S. nonprofit focused on serving persecuted Christians, reports persecution has risen globally for the third year in a row, affecting 215 million Christians a year.

The report defines Christian persecution as: "... any hostility experienced from the world as a result of one's identification as a Christian. Beatings, physical torture, confinement, isolation, rape, severe punishment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death are just a few examples of the persecution Christians experience on a daily basis."

## **The worst 50**

Both the [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom](#) and the [U.S. State Department](#) release periodic religious persecution reports, but Open Doors' World Watch list is the only annual survey to rank the 50 most difficult countries in which to be a Christian.



The World Watch List 2017 uses data from Open Doors field workers and independent experts to track the deep structures of Christian persecution. View the full list and map at [www.opendoorsusa.org](http://www.opendoorsusa.org). Open Doors evaluates the ability of Christians worldwide to live out their faith in five spheres of life—private, family, community, national and church. It then accounts for the degree of violence. The top 10 on the list of 50 present extreme persecution, followed by rankings 11-30 as very high and 31-50 as high levels of persecution. The International Institute for Religious Freedom independently audits the report.

The Top 10 list for 2017 includes North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and Eritrea.

Open Doors launched its first World Watch List 25 years ago. The 25-year cumulative Top 10 list for extreme persecution includes North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia, Afghanistan, Maldives, Yemen, Sudan, Vietnam and China.

### **Dominant driver**

Islamic extremism is cited as the global dominant driver of persecution, initiating oppression and conflict in 35 out of 50 countries on the World Watch 2017 list.

Violent incidents continue in the Middle East, where extremists are targeting Christians in Christian towns and parts of major cities. Islamic militancy is on the rise in Somalia, Kenya, Niger and Burkina Faso due to creation of more extremist schools.

Other key takeaways from the report are:

- Pakistan rose to No. 4 on the list and had the overall highest level of violence, exceeding northern Nigeria.
- Mali moved up the most places, from 44 to 32.
- Sri Lanka is new to the list this year.
- India—No. 15—climbed to its highest rank ever, due to Hindu nationalism.

David Curry, president and CEO of Open Doors USA, said: “For Christians in the West, the Open Doors World Watch List is a clear indicator that we need to advocate on behalf of those who do not have the same religious freedom privileges that we do. ... We hope the Trump administration will address religious liberties in the first 100 days in office.”

Don't forget: Behind the sobering data are the stories of 215 million Christians.

### **Take action**

- Read the [World Watch List 2017 report](#).
- [Sign 21CWI's letter](#) calling for President Trump to swiftly appoint or re-appoint an ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom who can help the U.S. government deal with these issues.
- Select a country on the list to “adopt” and pray for that country during

2017.

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