



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 16, 2014

## Christian Martyrdom Doubled in 2013, Persecution Growing

The number of Christians murdered for their faith almost doubled in 2013 over the previous year, according to an [annual survey](#) by Open Doors, a non-denominational ministry that monitors the persecution of believers and supports persecuted Christians worldwide. Hardline Islamist regimes and Islamic terrorists — [many funded by the Obama administration](#) and other Western governments — were behind most of the slaughter. However, for the 12th year in a row, the barbaric communist autocracy lording over North Korea was ranked as the number one persecutor of Christians in the world.



According to the organization's findings in its Open Doors 2014 World Watch List, released last week, Christians are still by far the most persecuted demographic on earth — and the trends are getting worse. In 2012, the group's annual report documented the martyrdom of more than 1,200 Christians. Last year, there were more than that [martyred just in Syria](#), where the Obama administration and a coalition of its allies — mostly European governments and Sunni Arab dictators — have been [arming and funding jihadist rebel groups](#).

Overall, the report documented 2,123 murders of Christians for their faith in 2013. An estimated 100 million believers in Christ, meanwhile, still suffer from ruthless persecution around the globe, Open Doors found. Among other atrocities carried out against Christians for their faith: imprisonment, torture, rape, execution, expulsion, forced labor, and more. Christians are persecuted in more than 65 countries around the world, with the vast majority in Asia and Africa — and especially in the Middle East, where Islamist rulers often purport to make faith in Christ a crime.

The surge in anti-Christian attacks was most extreme in Syria, as anti-Christian jihadist marauders continue to flood in from around the world to fight in the internationally fueled war against the Assad regime. Self-styled god-man Kim Jong-un in North Korea and his dictatorship, though, topped the list again. "It's one of the most repressive regimes in general for human rights," Open Doors communications director Emily Fuentes was [quoted as saying](#) by OneNewsNow. "But Christians are specifically targeted here as they face execution or life imprisonment."

According to Open Doors and other organizations, the tyrant in North Korea is conservatively believed to have between 50,000 and 70,000 people imprisoned in his gulags, which Fuentes compared to National Socialist (Nazi) concentration camps in Germany. The real numbers are likely far higher. Unique in the world, however, is the fact that North Koreans sent to the Stalinist regime's barbaric camps often do not go alone. Instead, their descendants can be imprisoned as well.

"It's a sentence that is not just for believers, but the sentence to a concentration camp can be for up to



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three generations of their family,” Fuentes [told](#) WND, echoing widespread concerns about the terror regime ruling what is often described as the “hermit” kingdom. “That’s their parents, their children and their grandchildren. No other country is like North Korea in that way.” The horror stories that have emerged from the concentration camps go beyond even the most horrendous nightmares imaginable.

Outside of the cultish regime in Pyongyang and other communist autocracies — both China and Vietnam made the list, for example — Open Doors found that the most severe persecution is concentrated in the Middle East. “Overwhelmingly, the main engine driving persecution of Christians in 36 of the top 50 countries is Islamic extremism,” the organization said in a [statement](#) announcing its findings. At the top of the list, for example, are Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, the Maldives, Pakistan, Iran, and Yemen — all Islamic countries where Christians are harshly persecuted for their faith.

As *The New American* [reported](#) last month, Christianity in Iraq is on the verge of extinction after two millennia in the nation following the U.S. “regime change” operation. Estimates suggest that under the regime of deposed strongman Saddam Hussein — despite his barbaric rule, minorities such as Christians were largely protected from Islamist violence — there were as many as 1.5 million Iraqi Christians. Over the last decade, however, facing ruthless persecution, more recent estimates suggest the number is now closer to 200,000. Many of the remaining Christians would leave if they could.

Much of the Iraqi Christian community fled to neighboring Syria, where the brutal Assad regime also protected Christians. Since the Obama administration-backed Sunni Islamic uprising, however, Christians have been targeted in what many experts even call “genocide” and “[ethnic cleansing](#).” As jihadist rebels took over wide swaths of the nation last year, the Christian minority — about 10 percent of the population — has suffered under an [increasingly brutal campaign](#) of persecution, murder, torture, rape, and more. Thousands have been martyred already, and hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee their homes.

One of the major trends identified and highlighted by Open Doors in its latest report is the growing persecution in countries with what is described as a “failed state.” Among the top ten worst nations for Christians are six with failed states: Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. Libya, where Obama waged an unconstitutional “regime change” operation that handed the nation to al-Qaeda-linked Islamic extremists, came in at number 13 on the rankings. Of course, every single nation on that list has [suffered from extensive U.S. government “intervention”](#) over the last decade.

In all, a Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life report [found](#) that Christianity faces restrictions and hostility in more than 110 countries — far more than half of the nations in the world. Still, despite ruthless anti-Christian persecution, which has plagued the world since the time of Christ and the Romans, Christianity remains the most widespread faith in the world. A separate Pew survey cited in news reports found that there are around 2.2 billion Christians in the world, about a third of the global population.

“The 2014 World Watch List is the most comprehensive study of the systematic persecution of Christians ever done,” observed President Dr. David Curry of Open Doors USA, which began its ministry over five decades ago by sneaking Bibles into countries ruled by anti-Christian communist regimes. “Often completely unaddressed in the West is the fact that Christians are the largest persecuted minority in the world.”

Dr. Curry noted that governments and other forces in countries such as North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and



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others all across the Middle East and North Africa are systematically targeting Christians — “imprisoning, punishing, and even in some cases murdering people who choose to express privately or publicly their Christian faith.” The latest WWL report, he added, should serve as a “wake-up call to Americans to become more aware of these atrocities and restrictions on religious freedom.”

As *The New American* [documented extensively](#) after an in-depth investigation, U.S. government meddling has been closely linked to Christian persecution around the globe — especially in the Middle East. From funding regimes and organizations that ruthlessly persecute believers to overthrowing governments that protected Christians and allowing Islamists to take over, Washington’s machinations have featured prominently in the growing terror facing followers of Christ worldwide.

In fact, some of the worst persecutors of Christians are actually top U.S. government allies, such as the dictatorship ruling Saudi Arabia. Others, in addition to being allies, are also top recipients of foreign aid — the government of Pakistan, for example, or Afghanistan. In the Ivory Coast, meanwhile, the Obama administration and the United Nations helped overthrow the Christian president and [replaced him](#) with a Muslim central banker whose militias slaughtered countless innocent Christians on the path to seizing power.

As Christian persecution continues to escalate around the world, Christians in the West — not to mention others — have remained largely ignorant of the atrocities faced daily by their brethren. Still, the latest Open Doors findings have been widely reported, and a growing number of prominent figures on the world stage are slowly starting to speak out. Whether or not that will change anything remains to be seen. In the meantime, persecuted Christians worldwide are requesting prayers.

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