



Written by [James Murphy](#) on January 17, 2019

Persecution of Christians Is On The Rise Worldwide, According to New Report

Open Doors, a Christian mission concerned with exposing and confronting the persecution of Christians worldwide, has released its annual [World Watch List](#) for the period of October 31, 2017 to November 1, 2018, and it's not good news for the followers of Jesus. Overall, the report concludes that at least 30 million more Christians faced persecution in 2018 than in 2017.



At least 4,136 Christians were killed in 2018 for reasons pertaining to their faith, an average of 11 per day. Over 1,200 churches or Christian buildings were attacked or destroyed. In all, Open Doors estimates that up to 245 million Christians are in danger of significant persecution worldwide.

According to the report, one in nine Christians in the world are likely to experience a high level of persecution. Should a Christian live somewhere in Asia, that number rises to one in three.

The Open Doors report lists the top 50 countries where Christians are most likely to be persecuted for their faith based on the pressure they receive from the government, the populace, or both. The report also takes into account where Christians are most likely to face violence, simply because of their faith.

Women are the most at-risk worldwide, because they often face a “double persecution” for being a Christian and for being a female. David Curry, CEO of Open Doors, wrote, “This year, we noticed how Christian women are especially targeted around the world. Often, they are culturally discriminated against because they are women — and when it's discovered they follow Jesus, the suffering can be even worse.”

Atheist and Islamic countries dominate the list. The People's Republic of China rose 16 spots because of the Communist Party's recent crackdown on both state-approved and unregistered churches. And seven of the top 10 countries most likely to abuse Christians — Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, and Iran — are Islamic countries.

In China, about 100 million Christians are facing increased persecution. A recent government crackdown has been called the worst in a decade in the communist nation. [On-line sales of Bibles have been prohibited](#), churches have been demolished, and [crosses and Bibles have even been burned](#) in the government's attempt to assert communist control over the populace. North Korea, the communist dictatorship run by the Kim family, remains number one on the list, as it has been for the past 18 years. The communist government is the main source of persecution for the approximately 300,000 Christians of the country.

From the report: “For three generations, everything in the country has been focused on idolizing the Kim family. Christians are seen as hostiles to be eradicated.”

It was hoped that events in 2018, such as the Winter Olympics held in neighboring South Korea and the summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, might lessen



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pressure on Christians, but that has not been the case. “Kim Jong-un has maintained tight control over the populace, and dissent or worshipping anything else is not tolerated.”

But it’s not just atheists, Muslims, and communists who are hostile to Christians. For the first time, India, a predominantly Hindu country, made the top 10 of the World Watch List. “Since the current ruling party took power in 2014, attacks have increased, and Hindu radicals believe they can attack Christians with no consequences,” the report said.

No less an authority than Jesus himself predicted the persecution that Christians would face. In Luke, the Lord said, “But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake.” (Luke 21:12, KJV)

Obviously, Jesus couldn’t have been more right.

The type of persecution spelled out in Open Doors’ World Watch List has not yet reached the United States. But that isn’t to say that persecution doesn’t exist here. There might not be the overt, life-threatening persecution faced in other parts of the world, but Christians in America are routinely marginalized and mocked for their faith. Christians in America are told to keep their faith in church and are slowly but surely being shut out of the nation’s conversations. This type of subtle bigotry can grow into more overt persecution, and American Christians need to call it out for what it is.

Still, our First Amendment gives Christians — and all religions — the right to practice their faith as they see fit. Though America is not a perfect place, we still have that going for us.

[Open Doors](#) urges us to pray for persecuted Christians throughout the world; and pray we should.

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