

As World Cup Continues, Pray for Persecuted Christians in Host Country of Qatar

Read Time: 1 Minute 28 Seconds

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world today, with more than 3.5 billion fans around the globe.

Its popularity continues to grow, especially with the extensive television coverage of the 2022 World Cup tournament, with all matches taking place in the Middle Eastern country of Qatar. The tournament began on Nov. 20 and will end this Sunday, Dec. 18. On Wednesday, France faced off against Morocco in one semifinal to determine who will face Argentina, a 3-0 victor over Croatia on Tuesday, for the World Cup championship.

Predominantly a Muslim country, Christians, according to the Voice of the Martyrs' Todd Nettleton, are constantly persecuted by their community and their government, especially those who evangelize and who leave the Islamic religion

The Voice of the Martyrs' Global Prayer Guide lists Qatar as a "restricted nation." The "restricted designation includes countries where government-sanctioned circumstances or anti-Christian laws leads to Christians being harassed, imprisoned, killed or deprived of possessions or liberties because of their witness.

Foreign Christians working inside Qatar make up 6% of the country's population, including 1% who are evangelicals.

The small number of Qatar believers must gather covertly for teaching or worship. The Voice of the Martyrs' website says "although sharing the gospel with Muslims is strictly

forbidden, some Christians still take great risks to evangelize Qatari citizens.”

Qataris can easily access the Bible on the internet, and some travel to nearby Bahrain to purchase the Bible. It is not illegal to own a Bible, but Qataris take significant risks to own or distribute one.

“As the World Cup action winds down, and more than a billion people around the world have tuned into the television coverage over the past few weeks, it’s easy to forget that Qatar—the [World] Cup’s host—is a place where our Christian brothers and sisters are persecuted simply for following Christ,” says Todd Nettleton, a spokesperson for The Voice of the Martyrs. “For a Qatari, converting to Christianity means losing everything.

“As we enjoy the matches and cheer on our favorite players, I hope that Christians will also be reminded to pray for our spiritual family members in Qatar—and especially those who right now are enduring ill will and persecution.” {eoa}

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