

JUST OUT: Afghanistan Now the Most Dangerous Place in the World to Be a Christian

The hidden followers of Jesus scattered throughout the cities and countryside of Afghanistan are now faced with the reality that they live in the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian, according to a report just out from the annual World Watch List of the NGO Open Doors International.

Following the August 2021 Taliban takeover, persecution has increased and if it wasn't already before, it is now even more impossible to have an open faith in Jesus Christ. Although the exact number of Christians in the country is unknown because of their secret faith, leaving Islam is considered shameful and under Sharia (Islamic law), they can be killed.

This is the first time another country has surpassed North Korea as the most dangerous place to live as a Christian in 20 years. The report shows that over 360 million Christians suffer high, very high or extreme levels of persecution, which is 20 million higher than last year.

The Taliban have outlawed the Bible app, and anyone who is found with it on their phone is immediately arrested. In a new decree, the Taliban leaders have banned any criticism of their leaders and scholars, and the policies they have put into place.

Following Afghanistan is North Korea as the second most dangerous place to live as a Christian, then Somalia third, Libya fourth and Yemen fifth. The Open Doors report reveals a harsh reality that 5,898 known Christians were killed for their faith in the last year, and more Christians have been murdered for their faith in the last 100 years than in any century before.

The United Nations reported earlier this year that about 84 million people were forcibly displaced in 2021—many of those Christians—worldwide. Christian women report the leading cause of their persecution as sexual assault.

Women in Afghanistan are still allowed to work, however they can't be outside without their head coverings. Young girls are only allowed to be educated through sixth grade and have even been taken as sex slaves for the Taliban.

Groups like Frontier Alliance International have sought to show the Christian church in the West what is truly happening to their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. Freedom is never promised in the Bible and God says that we are to expect persecution. Luke 10:3 says, "Go your ways. Listen, I am sending you out as lambs among wolves."

In a documentary released in 2019, the organization went to Iran and interviewed the underground church.

Iran, neighboring Afghanistan, has one of the fastest growing underground churches in the world. Men and women are having visions of the "man in white" before the gospel is even presented to them. Their discipleship movement is expanding rapidly as they train new Christian converts in the way of the gospel, and encourage them to go out and reach those around them.

The men and women who have found eternal joy are taught that no matter what they have done in their past, Jesus came and died for them on the cross and forgives them of their sin. Surrounded by such hopelessness and condemnation, when they find freedom they become bold impassioned followers of Jesus, willing to suffer joyfully for His sake.

One of the most remarkable aspects of what is going on in Iran is that women are leading the charge in the underground churches. This is a region of the world where women have little to no rights, yet in these discipleship movements they

are some of the leaders taking charge of the gospel going forth in Iran and across the Middle East.

Charisma News is continuing to monitor the Christian persecution in Afghanistan and will continue to report on updates as they come in. {eo}

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