

World Watch List 2026: Nearly 400 Million Christians Face Persecution Worldwide

A new report from Open Doors US revealed that millions more Christians have faced persecution this year than last year.

According to the World Watch List 2026 report, 388 million Christians have faced great levels of persecution and discrimination, or 1 in 7 of all Christians worldwide. The number is up from 380 million Christians last year.

The report details the top 50 countries leading Christian persecution, the top being North Korea for the 24th time. Other leading countries include Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea, Syria, and Nigeria. Persecution sources are listed as “Communist and post-Communist oppression,” “Islamic oppression,” “Dictatorial paranoia,” and others.



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Detailing the degree of persecution, Open Doors US wrote that 67,843 Christians experienced physical or psychological abuse; 224,129 Christians were forced to leave their homes and go into hiding; 5,202 Christians were sexually assaulted or harassed, or forced into marriages; 4,712 Christians faced detainment and arrest; 4,849 were killed; 3,302 were abducted; 3,632 churches were closed or attacked, and 25,794 attacks were made on Christian homes and businesses.

“Perhaps the biggest enabler of persecution is chaos and anarchy,” the report says. “The breakdown of state authority creates lawless zones where criminal gangs and religious extremists can attack Christians secure in the knowledge that they will not face any consequences.” Despite the levels of

persecution, the “church is still present and alive.”

Meanwhile, a separate report from the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe (OIDAC), specifically detailing attacks on Christians across Europe and the United Kingdom, found that a total of 2,211 anti-Christian hate crimes were recorded by governments and organizations across Europe. “The most affected countries in 2024 were France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain,” the report notes. Other countries, such as Poland and Spain, have “significant underreporting of aggression against clergy.”

Despite the rise in persecution worldwide, Bible sales surged by 12% throughout 2025.

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