

“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.”

Hebrews 13:3



“The Handbook of Prayer is unique. It is a virtual road map full of specific prayer requests to help you pray with understanding for the persecuted church. I will be using it and I hope that you will also”

Craig Marsh,
CEO Open Doors (NZ)

The Open Doors Handbook of Prayer is a snapshot of the 50 countries of the world where it is the hardest to be a Christian. These are the places where owning a Bible can get you arrested, where attending church could mean taking a beating, where the price of following Jesus is often paid in blood.

The handbook draws on data from the World Watch List, an annual ranking compiled by Open Doors researchers based on detailed information from Open Doors co-workers and key church leaders in over 60 countries. From North Korea to Nigeria, from Saudi Arabia to Syria, from Pakistan to the Palestinian Territories, these are the places **where faith costs the most.**



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. Open Doors supplies Bibles, leadership training, Scripture-based literacy programmes, livelihood support and advocacy services. We also seek to mobilise the church here to serve Christians living under religious persecution.

If you have any questions about the work of Open Doors, please do get in touch.

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Open *Doors*



Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

2012 edition

Where faith costs the most

A Handbook of Prayer for
the persecuted church

PRAY

WORLD WATCH 2012

Headlines from 2011

JANUARY

More than 200 people were killed in violence in Nigeria's Plateau state after Christmas Eve bombings of churches by Islamic extremists.

MARCH

Unidentified gunmen shot dead Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti, then Pakistan's only cabinet-level Christian and an outspoken critic of the country's widely condemned blasphemy laws.



JUNE

The Supreme Court of Iran upheld a death sentence for an Iranian pastor convicted of 'apostasy', even though a court determined that he was never a practising Muslim.

OCTOBER

Over 300 people were injured and 27 killed when Egyptian security forces attacked a Christian protest march in Cairo.

Some things change. Much stays the same.

For the tenth year in succession, the Open Doors World Watch List is topped by North Korea. It is without doubt the hardest place in the world to be a Christian.

But below the perennial 'winner', there is some change. For the first time, Pakistan entered the top ten, largely due to a turbulent year which saw the assassination of Shahbaz Bhatti – the highest ranking Christian politician in the land – and continuing routine harassment and persecution.

Pakistan's rise reflects the growing influence of Islamic extremism in the country. And extremist Islam remains the prime reason behind the persecution of Christians. Nine out of the top ten countries are Islamic states, and 38 out of the top 50. Islamic persecution lies behind the biggest risers on the list – Nigeria (up ten places to 13), Egypt (up four to 15) and Sudan (up a massive 19 places to 16). In Nigeria, the activity of extremist Muslims has led to many attacks and deaths. Over 300 Christians are known to have lost their lives in Nigeria in 2011; but the real figure may be far higher.

2011 also saw the creation of the world's newest state, South Sudan. But the Christians in (North) Sudan are increasingly isolated under their president, Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted at The Hague for crimes against humanity.

In North Africa, the Arab Spring brought mixed fortunes for Christians. The initial optimism, exemplified by the removal of Egypt's President Mubarak, was tempered by the Maspero massacre on 9 October, where the military turned on a peaceful protest march and at least 24 Christians lost their lives. The success of Islamic parties in the elections is a concerning development.

Four trends

Four significant trends underpin this list.

Islamic Extremism

In some countries persecution is state sponsored (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iran); in others it is the work of extremist sects (e.g. the Boko Haram in Nigeria). In many places it leads to a more extreme and oppressive culture in which Christians have to live. In places like Pakistan and even Turkey, Christians can feel like foreigners in their own land.

Fearful leadership

The Arab Spring has made dictators nervous. The succession of Kim Jong-Un following his father's death may well lead to increased persecution as he tries to establish control of this failing state. In other Communist or post-Communist states leaders are walking a tightrope as they seek to relax economic rules whilst at the same time keeping an iron grip on the country. Such places can see Christians as allies or threats. Certainly in some countries – like the Central Asian republics – conditions for Christians have got markedly worse.

Systemic corruption

In many countries Christians are surrounded by a web of corruption that is almost systemic. So, in places like Nigeria, Colombia, Pakistan, Indonesia and India, it is very hard for Christians to steer clear of such practices. As one Pakistani pastor remarked, "It's more important to know the judge, than to know the law."

Religious nationalism

The identification of a country with the dominant

religion to the exclusion of all others is a perennial problem. In India, for example, Hindu nationalists are fanning out into the villages, setting up schools and attempting to raise a new generation to believe India should be a pure Hindu land.

Church growth

Despite all this, the church is growing. In Africa and Asia the growth of Christianity is significant. Only in some areas of the world is Christianity actually declining, and in countries like Iraq that is due to a mass exodus of Christians, rather than people turning away from the faith.

There is a thrilling trend of Muslim believers coming to Christ, especially in places like Iran. Even in Saudi Arabia, a country traditionally so closed to the gospel, we have heard reports of people turning to Christ and an increased boldness in witness.

As a pastor in a Gulf state confided, "When we suffer, we bring a credibility to the gospel that cannot be ignored, because we show that Christ is worth it, and that is the secret of growth under persecution."

The World Watch List

The World Watch List is based on data supplied by Open Doors field personnel, along with data from independent experts. This information is translated into 'points' and countries are ranked accordingly. The total number of points increased in 2012, indicating that persecution is increasing. This is reflected in the list. Some countries have fallen in their ranking, not because they are improving, but because persecution in other countries has intensified.

Key:

Severe persecution



Election this year

Oppression



Travel opportunity

Severe limitations



DVD available

Significant limitations



NORTH KOREA



Still the most hostile country in which to live and practise the Christian faith, there are reports of many Christians arrested, with between 50-70,000 Christians believed to be languishing in labour camps for their refusal to worship founder Kim Il-Sung's cult. Half the population lives in the north, close to China, where family-based networks of house churches exist in significant numbers. Roughly ten million inhabitants are malnourished, with thousands eating only grass and bark.

- **Leader:**
Kim Jong-Un
- **Population:**
20 million (400,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Atheism/
traditional beliefs
- **Government:**
Communist dictatorship



Pray

- For freedom and justice under the new leadership of Kim Jong-Un
- Give thanks for the aid that Open Doors and other Christian NGOs can offer
- For the safety of North Korean Christians escaping to China.



AFGHANISTAN



All Afghan Christians come from a Muslim background. Believers who are discovered face discrimination from family, community and Muslim clergy. The government treats converts in a hostile manner and uses every means to make them recant. Christians cannot meet in public and meetings in private homes require great caution. Not a single official church building remains, not even for expat believers. In February 2011 an Afghan believer was released after spending nine months in prison on charges of apostasy.

- **Leader:**
President
Hamid Karzai
- **Population:**
32.4 million
(thousands of Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Islamic republic

Pray

- For courage and perseverance for individual Christians with so little fellowship
- That Taliban threats against Christian relief organisations will come to nothing
- For the church to grow despite the difficulties it faces.



SAUDI ARABIA



There is no religious freedom here. The legal system is based on Islamic law and conversion to another religion is punishable by death. Non-Muslim public worship is prohibited. The government recognises the right of non-Muslims to worship privately, but the religious police often does not. Worshipers risk imprisonment, torture and deportation. Most Christians are poorly paid foreign workers. Two Indian believers were imprisoned in January 2011 for ‘converting Muslims to Christianity’.

- **Leader:**
King Abdullah
- **Population:**
28 million (1.25 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Monarchy

Pray

- Thank God for Christians showing a new boldness in sharing their faith
- Praise Him that the number of Christian converts from Islam is increasing
- Pray for converts from Muslim backgrounds who risk being killed by their families.



SOMALIA



No one is expected to be a Christian in Somalia, so there is no organised church. Muslim converts exist as individual secret believers, and can only know a few others to make a small underground group. The largest known group is composed of five believers. For parents, it is dangerous to raise their children as Christians for fear of being discovered and executed. In September 2011, extremists from the Islamic militant group al-Shabaab beheaded a 17-year-old Somali Christian near Mogadishu.

- **Leader:**
President Sheikh Ahmed
- **Population:**
9.6 million (few Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Transitional

Pray

- For an end to the chronic political instability of this war-torn country
- That God will stay the hand of extremist group al-Shabaab
- For freedom for believers to worship and grow in their faith.



IRAN



Almost all Christian activity is illegal, from evangelism to Bible training to publishing Christian books. Armenian and Assyrian Christians are officially guaranteed religious freedom, but have reported physical abuse, imprisonment and harassment. Many church services are monitored by the secret police. The governor of Tehran has criticised Christian evangelism as a 'corrupt and deviant movement' and 'a cultural invasion of the enemy'. More than 200 Christians were arrested in 2011.

- **Leader:**
Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
- **Population:**
74.8 million
(460,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Islamic republic



Pray

- Thank God that despite the regime's harsh treatment of Christians, the church is growing
- For strength for Muslim-background believers who have been arrested, jailed and beaten
- For justice and release for Christian prisoners.



MALDIVES



Every citizen has to be Muslim on these remote islands. The government views itself as the protector and defender of Islam and enjoys full support by its citizens. Churches are forbidden, evangelism is banned and the import of Christian literature is prohibited. Believers hide their faith from their families and, when discovered, are pressured to convert to Islam. In October 2011, a foreign Christian teacher was imprisoned for 15 days and then deported after police found a Bible in his house.

- **Leader:**
President Mohamed Nasheed
- **Population:**
320,000 (few Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- For the few indigenous Christians to have courage amidst the secrecy
- Many young people seek education outside the islands. Pray that they would have the opportunity to hear the gospel
- Maldivian society contends with huge social problems of drug and alcohol abuse, marriage breakdown and child abuse. Pray that people will discover God's forgiveness.



UZBEKISTAN



The monitoring of all Christian activities has intensified, even in the Orthodox Church. Outreach, training and youth activities are forbidden in unregistered churches – and in the last ten years only one new church was granted registration. Private Bible studies are always in danger of being closed down. Churches are raided and literature confiscated. Printing or importing Christian literature is prohibited. Christians are fined or given prison sentences, and may face unfair treatment in court.

- **Leader:**
President Islam Karimov
- **Population:**
27.7 million
(208,500 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Authoritarian
(republic)

Pray

- For pastors trying to lead their churches with limited resources
- For courage for Muslim-background believers who experience great pressure from family and society
- A 27-year-old convert from Islam is currently serving ten years in prison on false charges. Pray for his release.



YEMEN



Islam is the state religion and source of legislation. The few hundred Christians from a Muslim background meet secretly as they face persecution from authorities, family and extremist Islamic groups. In the north, no church buildings are allowed. There is some religious freedom for foreigners but evangelism is prohibited. There are four official churches in Aden for the several thousand Christian expats and refugees living in Yemen, but large numbers have left as a result of the Arab Spring riots.

- **Leader:**
Interim leader
Abdrabbuh
Mansour Hadi
- **Population:**
24.8 million (a
few thousand
Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- Thank God that Christians, despite their political differences, have maintained unity in Christ
- For four foreign Christians kidnapped in 2009 who remain missing
- Presidential elections are due in February 2012. Pray for peace and stability for this deeply divided country.



IRAQ



Sectarian violence caused tens of thousands of Christians to leave the country in 2011. Christians feel that the government fails to protect them, with individuals being threatened, robbed, raped or kidnapped and churches being bombed. Iraq's constitution says each individual has freedom of thought, conscience and belief, but there is no article on changing one's religion and Islamic law forbids conversion of Muslims to other religions. In August, at least four churches were targeted by bomb attacks in Kirkuk.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister
Nouri al-Maliki
- **Population:**
32.6 million
(300,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Parliamentary
democracy



Pray

- For the many Christian refugees who have been displaced from their homes by religious violence
- For wise leadership and government to bring Christians justice and protection from terrorist groups
- For Open Doors workers training trauma counsellors to help children and families affected by persecution.



PAKISTAN



Christians are a beleaguered minority caught between Islamic militants who routinely target them for violence and an Islamising culture that discriminates against them. Death threats are routine for church leaders and damage to church property is a monthly occurrence. Christians cannot rely on the government to protect them. The killing in March 2011 of Christian Cabinet Minister Shahbaz Bhatti was 'one of the most demoralising acts for us of recent years', according to a Karachi church leader.

- **Leader:**
President Asif
Ali Zardari
- **Population:**
177 million (5.3
million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- For Asia Bibi, the first Pakistani Christian woman sentenced to death on blasphemy charges, who is still in prison
- Praise God that the Christian population is growing, and a steady trickle of Muslims is joining churches
- Praise God that a year after Open Doors' Right to Believe campaign, Pakistan has backed a UN resolution calling for all states to foster religious freedom; pray that this may become more of a reality in 2012.



ERITREA



All evangelical churches were closed following the government's ban on all religious groups other than Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran or Islamic in 2002. Anyone discovered to be an evangelical is tortured and forced to revert to the registered denominations. If they don't, they are held in military camps without trial. Around 1500 are believed to be imprisoned; at least five died in 2011. There was a renewed crackdown on house churches in 2011; at least 23 believers were imprisoned.

- **Leader:**
President Isaias Afewerki
- **Population:**
5.4 million
(2.5 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam/Christianity (Orthodox)
- **Government:**
One-party state

Pray

- Many Christians fled the country in 2002, so the majority of believers are recent converts. Pray for their spiritual growth
- Ask God to physically and spiritually sustain His children who are imprisoned in inhumane conditions
- For worldwide awareness of the plight of Eritrean Christians.



LAOS



The government exercises tight control on all parts of society. Small independent congregations are under pressure and have been refused recognition. Local authorities regard them as enemies; Buddhist leaders and village shamans watch them closely. Most believers are from ethnic minorities. Christians from the Katin or Hmong tribes have been detained, pressured to renounce their faith or even killed, often in army clashes. At least four Hmong Christians were killed in April 2011 and several arrested.

- **Leader:**
President Choummaly Sayasone
- **Population:**
6.3 million
(167,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Buddhism
- **Government:**
Communist state

Pray

- Thank God that the church is growing, but it is difficult for Christians to get hold of or afford a Bible – pray for miracles!
- For courage and strength for persecuted believers, especially the Hmong Christians who are most vulnerable
- Thank God for positive signs from the government: Christians given land, hospital treatment and education.



NORTHERN NIGERIA



Persecution of Christians is driven by extremist Islam. In the Sharia states of the north, there is popular support for radical Muslim expression, as shown by the many violent attacks on churches and Christian communities. At least 300 Christians were killed in 2011. About 5 million believers are believed to be under intense pressure as a result of their faith. The Boko Haram sect has become a serious threat. From 2009 to date they have destroyed over 50 churches and killed around 10 pastors.

- **Leader:**
President Goodluck Jonathan
- **Population:**
70 million (27 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Federal republic



Pray

- For healing for Christian families who have been bereaved through vicious attacks
- Thank God that the church is strong and that Christians express their faith with confidence
- For wisdom for Christian President Goodluck Jonathan governing a Muslim-majority population.



MAURITANIA



Isolated from the rest of the world because of its mainly desert landscape and oppressive regime, Mauritania is very proud to be officially a pure Muslim country. The constitution does not provide for religious freedom and its laws prohibit conversion to Christianity. The sentence for apostasy is death. Pressure on Muslim-background believers from family, tribe and leaders of local mosques is very high. There is some freedom for expat churches, but Mauritanian Christians must meet in secret.

- **Leader:**
General Mohamed Abdelaziz
- **Population:**
3.5 million (4,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Islamic republic



Pray

- There were reports of local Christians being beaten. Pray for healing for those who've been attacked
- For wisdom for Christians and churches that are being monitored and for unity within the Christian community
- Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) is gaining support among local Mauritians and is monitoring Christians. Pray that its influence will diminish.



EGYPT



Since the revolution of January 2011, levels of violence against Christians have increased. Salafi Muslim attacks on churches led to the massacre at Maspero where the military did nothing to protect Christians and even participated in the killings. In rural areas, Copts are constantly terrorised, while security forces turn a blind eye; Coptic girls are abducted and forced into Islamic marriages. Support for the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists is growing but the army still retains power.

- **Leader:**
Field Marshal
Tantawi
- **Population:**
82.5 million (10
million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- That God will bring peace and justice to Egypt through those who govern
- For the church as it disciples and supports Muslim-background believers in secret
- Thank God for the prayerfulness of Christians and the increased unity between denominations.



SUDAN



Islamic groups, wanting to form an Islamic state, persecute the church. Conversion is not recognised: believers from a Muslim background are treated as if they are Muslims. Following South Sudan's secession from the north in July 2011, the president asserted that Sudan's constitution would be based on Sharia. Many believers have since left the country. The possibility of war between Sudan and South Sudan is a concern for Christians – warfare can easily cover up acts of religious persecution.

- **Leader:**
President Omar
al-Bashir
- **Population:**
33.4 million (num-
ber of Christians
unknown)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- Praise God that, despite the difficulties, the number of Muslim-background believers in Sudan is rising
- For peace and stability in this volatile region
- That God will strengthen individual Christians to stand strong.



BHUTAN



As the country moves from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, the situation is likely to change for believers. The church is no longer an underground church, since Christians are allowed to meet in private homes without government interference. However, Christians in remote villages encounter more difficulties. The government is exploring possibilities for church registration, but is also considering an amendment to the penal code aimed at prohibiting 'conversion by coercion or inducement'.

- **Leader:**
King Jigme Wangchuck
- **Population:**
738,000 (16,500 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Mahayana Buddhism
- **Government:**
Monarchy



Pray

- Thank God that there have been no reports of Christians being arrested or physically harmed in the past year
- That the transition to a more democratic rule will mean positive changes for Christians
- For training opportunities for Sunday school teachers and unity among pastors.



TURKMENISTAN



All unregistered religious activity is illegal here and obtaining church registration can be difficult, if not impossible. Police and secret services monitor Christian activities, making it difficult for churches to teach the gospel. The local authorities are hostile towards Christians; dozens of believers were detained for short periods in 2011. The printing and importing of religious literature is effectively banned. Indigenous believers face the open hostility of family and community and come under constant pressure to recant.

- **Leader:**
President Berdymukhamedov
- **Population:**
5.1 million (95,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
One-party state



Pray

- For Pastor Ilmurad who has been in prison since October 2010, sentenced to four years on false charges
- For the translation of God's Word into local languages
- That government officials will be willing to register Turkmen churches and organisations.



VIETNAM



The authorities keep a close eye on all Christian activities. Church leaders are monitored and Christians are routinely questioned by security police, especially when they witness to others. In tribal areas, village leaders report on Christian activity and often influence local government to take action against the increasing growth of the church. Evangelism and teaching are done secretly. There are reports that the army attacked two Christian Hmong villages this year, injuring at least 16 people.

- **Leader:**
President Truong Tan Sang
- **Population:**
89 million (9.4 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Buddhism
- **Government:**
Communist state



Pray

- For believers from ethnic minority groups who are isolated and face the greatest challenges
- For health and protection for travelling Bible teachers
- For Open Doors training programmes for women and youth and children's workers.



CHECHNYA



Still formally a part of the Russian Federation, this remains one of the most difficult places for Christians in Russia. Persecution is political as well as religious, since Christianity is associated with Russia, with whom they had civil war. The influence of Islam is growing; all indigenous Christians are seen as traitors to Islam and society and suffer greatly from government oppression. Conversion is a disgrace to the family and brings the risk of 'honour killings'. Fellowship is almost impossible.

- **Leader:**
President Ramzan Kadyrov
- **Population:**
1.3 million (dozens of Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic (Russian Federation)

Pray

- For the few very small Chechen Christian group meetings, with no more than 3 to 5 members
- For Christians who receive death threats and must leave the country
- That young Chechens, disappointed with both the corrupt government and rife unemployment, may discover God's call on their lives.



CHINA



Christianity continues to grow rapidly. Sources report that government representatives have been in dialogue with some house church leaders, leading many to believe the government has finally understood the house church is not a political threat to the state. Yet severe repression continues for some. In April the Shouwang church in Beijing was barred from meeting in its new premises and one of its pastors put under house arrest. In July a pastor was sentenced to two years in labour camp for organising ‘illegal meetings’.

- **Leader:**
President Hu Jintao
- **Population:**
1.35 billion
(80 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Atheism
- **Government:**
Socialism



Pray

- For wisdom for church leaders who are in dialogue with the government
- For more trained leaders to shepherd the growing church
- For Open Doors staff training Christian nationals to develop and produce indigenous Christian materials.



QATAR



Nearly all Qataris are Muslims and most Christians in the country are foreign workers. The constitution protects religious freedom, but expat Christians can usually only meet in assigned compounds. During 2011, several foreign workers were deported for their Christian activities. Converting from Islam to Christianity is considered apostasy and converts face persecution from family and the government. 2011 saw unprecedented levels of social unrest and the local population seems more open to change.

- **Leader:**
Emir Sheikh Hamad
- **Population:**
1.8 million
(90,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Traditional emirate

Pray

- For opportunities for foreign Christians to share the love of Jesus
- That the growing desire for change will lead to people being more open to the gospel
- For Open Doors partners delivering Christian literature and multi-media to Qatar.



ALGERIA



Protests against the regime in January 2011 left five dead and over 800 injured, but the government remains in control. The church, mostly first-generation believers from a Muslim background, faces many forms of discrimination. There were reports of churches being ordered to close and Christians arrested. A restrictive religious law makes evangelism risky and effectively outlaws house churches. In May, a Christian convert was sentenced to 5 years in prison for giving a Christian CD to a neighbour.

- **Leader:**
President Abdelaziz Bouteflika
- **Population:**
35.9 million
(25,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- Islamist groups encouraged by the Arab Spring are increasing pressure on the government. Pray that the authorities would have wisdom in dealing with such groups
- That discipleship and leadership training programmes supported by Open Doors will strengthen the church to stand firm
- Praise God for the amazing growth of the Algerian church despite the difficulties it faces.



COMOROS



Persecution on these islands comes mainly from the indigenous Muslim community, although government restraints remain tight. A referendum passed in 2009 installed Islam as the state religion and seriously restricted religious freedom. Only expats are allowed to operate churches. Converts from Islam to Christianity can be prosecuted, so Muslim-background believers operate in underground fellowships. Yet the church is reported to be growing in size and strength.

- **Leader:**
President Ikililou Dhoinine
- **Population:**
754,000 (6,400 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- The influence of radical elements from Iran causes Muslims in local mosques to be vigilant about Christian activities. Pray that their power will weaken
- For strength and courage for the few believers who must meet in secret
- Open Doors funds the translation and distribution of literature in Comoros. Pray that God's Word will reach those who need it most.



Arab Spring or Christian Winter?

It started with the death of one man. Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian street vendor, set himself alight when his goods were confiscated and he refused to pay a bribe to get them back. But that single, tragic act of desperation launched a wave of protest which brought about regime change in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, reform in Morocco, Algeria, Yemen and Jordan, and brutal repression in places like Syria, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Western media and politicians welcomed the changes – and the movement was christened ‘the Arab Spring’. But events are more complex than the media sometimes portrays. The Arab Spring was positively acclaimed as a social movement demanding an end to human rights violations, government corruption and poverty, but the immediate future for these countries is not a

straightforward progression to freedom, justice and prosperity. It’s a complex tussle in which the military, the remnants of old regimes, and the power-hungry Islamists are all involved.

The Arab Spring may bloom into any number of forms, including the restoration of the old order, anarchy and fragmentation, or creeping Islamisation. And a change of leader does not mean a change of leadership. Those at the top maintain a grip on power. In Egypt, the military remain very much in charge. In Yemen, a change of president has not yet led to any structural changes.

For Christians in these countries, the future is far from clear. Anti-Christian sentiments are on the rise, and violence against both historical Christian minorities and Muslim-background believers is increasing. The

empowerment of Islamic groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, and Salafism, is likely to have negative effects on the position of Christians. Some analysts even see the Arab Spring as a prelude to a 'Christian Winter' in which the oppression of Christian minorities will intensify.

Egypt is a weathervane. Home to three-quarters of the Christian population in the Middle East, the country is undoubtedly Islamising. In recent months, Coptic Christians suffered from violent attacks by Islamic groups. When they marched in protest they were attacked by individuals and the military, leaving at least 24 peaceful Christian protesters dead and hundreds injured.

The institution of elections may benefit Islamic extremists, who are often seen as the only ones who can solve structural poverty and unemployment. In Egypt and Morocco, Islamists have been victorious in the parliamentary elections. In Libya, the transition government announced the implementation of Sharia, as did the Ennahda party of Tunisia. And the chaotic and

threatening situation in the region means that many Christians are emigrating.

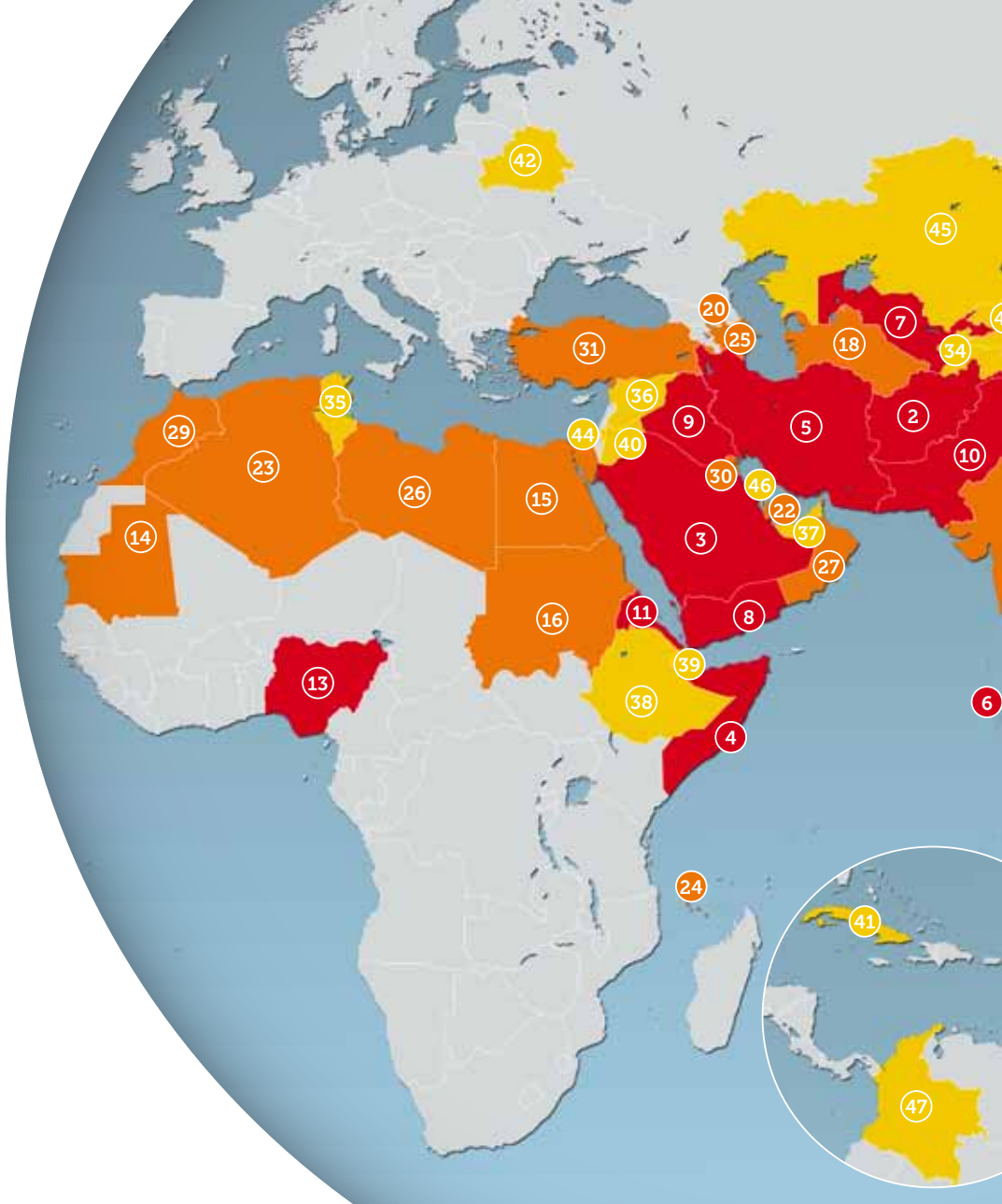
It is easy to feel gloomy about such a situation. But there are springtime signs of hope as well. There has been a slow, but steady, growth of Muslim-background believers.

And there has been much prayer, bringing hope, unity and purpose. In Egypt, tens of thousands of believers from many denominations met on 11 November 2011 to pray. The words on a wall of one Cairo church sum up their belief: "Before all your people, I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you." (Exodus 34:10)

Christians in the Middle East have put their hope in God, not human institutions. Their voices have been raised, their prayers have been offered. It is vital that we, too, play our part this year.

Demonstrators in Cairo protesting against an attack on a church in the village of Sool





**“...be alert and always keep
on praying for all the Lord’s people”**

Ephesians 6:18



- 1 NORTH KOREA
- 2 AFGHANISTAN
- 3 SAUDI ARABIA
- 4 SOMALIA
- 5 IRAN
- 6 MALDIVES
- 7 UZBEKISTAN
- 8 YEMEN
- 9 IRAQ
- 10 PAKISTAN
- 11 ERITREA
- 12 LAOS
- 13 NORTHERN NIGERIA
- 14 MAURITANIA
- 15 EGYPT
- 16 SUDAN
- 17 BHUTAN
- 18 TURKMENISTAN
- 19 VIETNAM
- 20 CHECHNYA
- 21 CHINA
- 22 QATAR
- 23 ALGERIA
- 24 COMOROS
- 25 AZERBAIJAN
- 26 LIBYA
- 27 OMAN
- 28 BRUNEI
- 29 MOROCCO
- 30 KUWAIT
- 31 TURKEY
- 32 INDIA
- 33 BURMA (MYANMAR)
- 34 TAJIKISTAN
- 35 TUNISIA
- 36 SYRIA
- 37 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
- 38 ETHIOPIA
- 39 DJIBOUTI
- 40 JORDAN
- 41 CUBA
- 42 BELARUS
- 43 INDONESIA
- 44 PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES
- 45 KAZAKHSTAN
- 46 BAHRAIN
- 47 COLOMBIA
- 48 KYRGYZSTAN
- 49 BANGLADESH
- 50 MALAYSIA



WORLD WATCH 2012

PRAY

WORLD
WATCH 2012



“To hear that you are praying is so good. We need your prayer, care and presence: to know that we are not alone, that we are in the body together and have hope for the future”

Iranian pastor

OpenDoors
Serving persecuted Christians worldwide



AZERBAIJAN



An officially secular state, the government has a negative attitude towards any form of religion. However, the population is mainly Muslim and the influence of traditional Islam is growing. All religious groups were required to renew their registration by 1 January 2010; since then no new churches have been able to register. Churches without registration are often raided, with leaders arrested or fined. Azeri believers are considered traitors as Christianity is associated with the country's rival, Armenia.

- **Leader:**
President
Ilham Aliyev
- **Population:**
9.3 million (125,000
Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- Praise God that the number of indigenous believers continues to grow
- For churches and church leaders under surveillance by the authorities
- For those believers who continue to be active in outreach despite the risks.



LIBYA



Under Gaddafi's despotic rule, the situation for Christians was already extremely harsh. The secret police restricted church activities and evangelism was criminalised. But following the civil war in which Gaddafi died, things could get even worse. During the unrest, 75 per cent of expat Christians left the country. The National Transitional Council is expected to implement Sharia and make Libya an even more Islamic state. Under their supervision, St George's Church was ransacked when they took control of Tripoli.

- **Leader:**
Chairman
Mustafa Jalil
- **Population:**
6.4 million (50,000
Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Transitional
government

Pray

- There were reports of Muslim-background believers being beaten by family members. Pray for perseverance
- During the uprising, many Christians were open about their faith, and now fear the consequences. Pray for their protection
- Two Christians have been held hostage by the NTC for importing Christian books. Ask God to protect those delivering Christian literature into the country.



OMAN



Almost the entire Christian population is expatriate. The constitution protects religious freedom, but legislation is based on Islamic law and all religious organisations must register. Foreign Christians can worship in private homes or work compounds, but Christian meetings are monitored. Muslim-background believers risk persecution from family and society. 2011 saw an outbreak of civil unrest in which two people died. However, protests faded after the Sultan promised more jobs and benefits.

- **Leader:**
Sultan Qaboos
- **Population:**
2.8 million (35,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Absolute monarchy

Pray

- Several foreign workers were deported in 2011 because of their Christian activities. Pray for wisdom for foreign Christians still in the country
- For spiritual growth and encouragement for the small number of indigenous believers
- For the spread of the gospel through Christian satellite TV and radio programmes.



BRUNEI



About two-thirds of people in this tiny Islamic nation are ethnic Malays. Although in theory all other religions may be practised in peace, in practice only non-Malays can choose their faith. If a Malay converts, this 'disturbs peace and harmony' and they are automatically scheduled for re-education to Islam. The monitoring of churches increased in 2011. In October the Sultan called for an Islamic Criminal Law which will complicate the situation for Christians further, especially those known to have converted.

- **Leader:**
Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah
- **Population:**
406,000 (39,500 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Constitutional sultanate

Pray

- That the proposed Criminal Law will not be introduced
- Religious instruction in all schools, including the six Christian schools, is on Islam alone. Pray for wisdom for Christian parents
- Restrictions on the importing of Christian materials make Bibles and Christian literature difficult to obtain. Pray that Christians will have access to God's Word.



MOROCCO



Protests inspired by the Arab Spring forced the king to adopt a number of political reforms in 2011. The moderate Islamic Justice and Development Party won a huge victory in elections at the end of 2011 and must now provide a Prime Minister. Persecution comes mainly from Muslim extremist influence on the authorities and society. Foreign Christians have some freedom to practise their faith, but Muslim-background believers face rejection from friends and family.

- **Leader:**
King Mohammed VI
- **Population:**
32.3 million (22,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Constitutional monarchy

Pray

- The government bans all proselytising. Pray for wisdom and boldness for Christians in sharing their faith
- The distribution of Christian materials is prohibited. Pray that Christians may have access to Bibles and study materials
- For discipleship training and Christian radio programmes organised by Open Doors.



KUWAIT



The constitution protects religious freedom but the government restricts this in practice. Conversion from Islam to other religions is not permitted. There are only a few hundred Kuwaiti believers; most Christians are foreign workers. Converts risk harassment, arrest and even physical abuse. It was reported that one Christian was forced to flee for his faith and one Christian was arrested in 2011. Yet the number of Muslim-background believers is growing rapidly and many are bold in sharing their faith.

- **Leader:**
Emir Sheikh Sabah
- **Population:**
2.8 million (421,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Constitutional emirate



Pray

- Kuwait's prime minister and cabinet resigned in December 2011 over an alleged corruption row. Pray that the new government will relax restrictions on religious freedom
- Islamic instruction is compulsory in all schools. Pray that children will hear of Jesus' love
- Obtaining a place to worship is extremely difficult. Ask God to provide meeting places for expat Christians.



TURKEY



Although Turkey is a secular state, government restrictions, social hostilities and nationalism are key sources of persecution, causing discrimination, hate crimes and unfair judicial treatments. Muslims who convert to Christianity risk losing their jobs and being disinherited by their family. Some churches are registered and have permission to organise church services. Police officers are present in some church services to protect church-goers, but also to monitor the activities of Christians.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister Erdoğan
- **Population:**
73.6 million (100,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Parliamentary republic



Pray

- Sharing the gospel is socially unacceptable and sometimes dangerous. Ask God to protect those sharing the love of Jesus
- In recent years Turkey has become more open to public expressions of Islam. Pray for more openness to the gospel
- The trial of the murderers of three Christians in Malatya is still ongoing. Pray for justice to be done.



INDIA



While most Christians remain relatively free, violence against evangelists, pastors and church members continues on a monthly basis, usually in rural areas. There were 109 recorded incidents of anti-Christian violence in 2011. Persecution is largely due to the growth of Christianity among the low castes, which threatens Hindu leaders. Despite being voted out of national power, the extremist BJP party continues to push its ideology into the cultural mainstream.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
- **Population:**
1.2 billion (71 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Hinduism
- **Government:**
Federal republic



Pray

- Extremists are regrouping in rural areas, attempting to raise up a new 'Hindu Taliban'. Pray that their influence will decrease
- Local police often side with those who commit the violence. Pray that the government will provide protection and justice for the Christian minority
- That biblical training, literacy and livelihood projects run by Open Doors will help strengthen the church.



BURMA (MYANMAR)



The transition to a semi-civilian government in March stirred hopes for significant change, including the re-admission of Aung San Suu Kyi into the political arena. A new Human Rights Commission was established in September with minorities represented on it. However, pressure on Christians from society and the military appears unchanged. There were several reports of the army harassing Christians of the Kachin tribe. In November 2011 a bomb killed 7 children and 3 Kachin people at an orphanage run by Christians.

- **Leader:**
President Thein Sein
- **Population:**
48.3 million (4.6 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Buddhism
- **Government:**
In transition to parliamentary democracy



Pray

- For wisdom for a respected member of the Christian Kachin minority serving on the new Human Rights Commission
- Hundreds of imprisoned political dissidents were released at the end of 2011, but at least 2,000 remain in prison. Pray for their release
- That promised political reform will bring more freedom to Burma's Christians.



TAJIKISTAN



New legal restrictions introduced in 2011 are likely to increase pressure on the church. In August, a Parental Responsibility Law was introduced which prohibits under-18s from participating in any religious activity except funerals. Although not particularly aimed at Christians, it will negatively impact youth and children's activities. Parents disobeying the law face fines and prison sentences of up to 8 years. Amendments to the Criminal Code punish with lengthy prison terms participants in unauthorised 'extremist religious' teaching.

- **Leader:**
President Emomali Rahmon
- **Population:**
7 million (74,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- Converts from Islam come under pressure from family and society to renounce their faith. Pray for perseverance
- More than half of the population is under age 18. Pray that young people will have the opportunity to hear the gospel despite the new laws
- The import and distribution of Christian literature is very restricted. Pray that God's people will have access to the Bible.



TUNISIA



Home of the Jasmine revolution which gave rise to the Arab Spring, Tunisia is the country where democratic transition seems to have the greatest chance of success. However, elections in October were won by the Islamic Ennahda party, which has announced its intention to transform Tunisia into an Islamic state. Reports indicate that pressure on Christians has increased since the revolution. The murder of a Polish priest in February is a clear example of an increase in religious violence.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister
Hamadi Jebali
- **Population:**
10.5 million
(23,500 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- Radical Muslims are organising violent demonstrations that the weakened security services find difficult to contain. Pray for wisdom for the authorities
- A local church leader had to flee the country after his family was threatened. Pray for protection for Christian leaders
- Foreign Christians have reported increased surveillance by the authorities. Pray for courage and discernment in sharing the gospel.



SYRIA



Months of anti-government protests have left Syria on the verge of civil war. Under the secular regime of Bashar al-Assad, Christians had relative freedom to worship, although Christian meetings were monitored by the secret police and evangelism was discouraged. Since March there has been a rise in the number of extremist Islamic groups operating in the country. There have been reports of Christians being threatened and churches being raided. In one city, Christians are afraid to leave their homes.

- **Leader:**
President Bashar
al-Assad
- **Population:**
21 million (1.9
million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- For an end to the bloodshed and that any change of government will lead to greater freedom for the people of Syria
- That the rights of Christians and other religious minorities will be protected
- That believers will have strength to stand firm and bring the light of Christ to their nation.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



One of the most liberal countries in the Gulf, the constitution provides for some religious freedom, although the law denies Muslims the freedom to change religion. Society's attitude towards Christianity is hostile and the government places restrictions on Christians, who are mainly foreign workers. There were reports of some deportations. Evangelism is prohibited, but non-Muslim groups can worship freely in private homes or dedicated buildings. Converts to Christianity may be pressured to return to Islam or hide their faith.

- **Leader:**
President Sheikh Khalifa
- **Population:**
7.9 million (405,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Federation

Pray

- Though the Arab Spring did not affect the UAE much, it has caused people to question what good leadership is about. Pray that this will lead to opportunities for sharing the gospel
- There are many opportunities for Muslim–Christian dialogue. Pray for wisdom for Christians reaching out to Muslims
- For Open Doors workers providing support and training to expat Christians.



ETHIOPIA



Evangelical churches face some opposition from the Orthodox Church, which sees the fast growth of the Protestant Church as a threat. But the main source of persecution is Islamic extremism, much of which is fuelled by external sources. The unprecedented shift from Sunni Islam to Wahhabism has resulted in increased intolerance towards Christians. More than 3,000 Christians were displaced when Muslim extremists set fire to 59 churches and 28 homes in Jimma in March.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister Meles Zenawi
- **Population:**
84.7 million (51.5 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Christianity (Orthodox)
- **Government:**
Federal republic



Pray

- The unresolved conflict in the east is attracting extremist groups such as al-Shabaab from Somalia. Pray for a solution to this conflict
- There were reports of Christians being imprisoned on false charges. Pray that the authorities would act justly
- Open Doors provides Bibles and leadership training to the church. Pray that many will grow in the faith as a result.



DJIBOUTI



Although Islam is the state religion, the constitution protects religious freedom and the government generally enforces these protections. It seems that family and local community are more active drivers of persecution than government. The small Christian community consists mostly of expats. There are very few indigenous believers, and conversion from Islam is strongly discouraged. New believers often do not disclose their faith to their family and local community for fear of discovery.

- **Leader:**
President
Ismael Guelleh
- **Population:**
906,000 (15,000
Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- The country is 99 per cent Sunni Muslim. Pray for a new openness to the gospel
- That isolated believers would find ways to have fellowship
- That God would use Christian TV and internet sites in the French language to build His kingdom in Djibouti.



JORDAN



One of the most Western-orientated countries in the Middle East, Orthodox Christians experience some religious freedom. However, leaving Islam is prohibited and Muslim-background believers often face legal discrimination and abuse from family and community. Yet more Muslims are coming to faith. As a result the authorities are increasingly monitoring churches. There are large numbers of Christian and Muslim refugees from Iraq and Syria, which puts increasing pressure on the church.

- **Leader:**
King Abdullah II
- **Population:**
6.3 million
(320,000
Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Constitutional
monarchy

Pray

- Protests for political reform have been limited. Pray for just and stable government in this nation
- That government restrictions on church groups and activities would be relaxed
- For those working to support the many refugees in the country.



CUBA



One of the few remaining Communist regimes, Cuba continues to isolate itself from the rest of the world. The totalitarian regime allows no competitors of any kind. Religious groups complain about widespread surveillance and infiltration by state security agents. Pastors and Christians are sometimes pressured to stop evangelising and to limit their activities to their own church premises. Although most Christians here are Roman Catholics, recent years have seen great growth among evangelicals.

- **Leader:**
President
Raul Castro
- **Population:**
11.3 million (6.3 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Christianity
(Catholicism)
- **Government:**
Communist state

Pray

- Praise God for the growth of the church here and pray that it would continue
- The growing numbers of unregistered house churches have little access to Bibles, which are distributed through official channels only. Pray that God's Word will reach them
- That pastors and church leaders would receive biblical and discipleship training so that the church can grow in maturity.



BELARUS



Often considered the last surviving dictatorship in Europe, the government allows almost no political opposition. The Orthodox Church is the only officially recognised denomination. Unregistered churches are monitored by the secret police and religious activity can result in imprisonment or fines. Because evangelical and Pentecostal churches are growing, persecution is intensifying. Two leaders of the Belarusian Christian Democratic party were sentenced to labour camp in 2011, but later freed.

- **Leader:**
President
Alexander
Lukashenko
- **Population:**
9.6 million (6.7 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Christianity
(Orthodox)
- **Government:**
Republic
(dictatorship)



Pray

- For courage and perseverance for pastors whose churches are being monitored
- For a breakthrough for churches who have been trying for many years to register
- Praise God that the church is growing. Pray for a change in the government's attitude to Christianity.



INDONESIA



The church is facing increasing hostility. Though the national authorities try to look neutral, in reality they are eager to win support from Muslim parties. Muslim extremists continue to grow more violent towards Christians and experience little resistance from authorities. Radicals have found an ally in the blasphemy law, which they use to legitimise their actions. In the lead-up to Easter, police defused five bombs buried near a Catholic church near Jakarta, which were due to explode on Good Friday.

- **Leader:**
President
Yudhoyono
- **Population:**
242 million (37 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- In September, a Muslim attacked a church in Java, wounding 27 people. Pray for their healing
- Attacks against church buildings are a regular occurrence. Pray that the authorities will do more to bring those responsible to account
- For Open Doors training programmes designed to strengthen Muslim-background believers.



PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES



The decline in the number of Palestinian believers is accelerating. Many emigrate because of the increasing influence of Islam, as well as political and economic factors. Indigenous Christians have the right to practise their religion, but believers from a Muslim background face discrimination from family and community when their faith is known. In Gaza, believers are also oppressed by radical Muslim groups. On the West Bank, although there is no official persecution, Christians face some discrimination.

- **Leader:**
President
Mahmoud Abbas
- **Population:**
4.2 million (40,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Interim administration



Pray

- A Christian escaped narrowly when a bomb was thrown at his car in February. Pray that Christians are valued by Muslim Arabs and not seen as their enemies
- For Christians reaching out to Muslims
- President Abbas asked the UN to recognise an independent Palestinian State in September. Pray that political tensions will not damage relations between Messianic believers and Palestinian Christians.



KAZAKHSTAN



In September 2011 two laws were passed that further restrict religious rights. The laws, which require the re-registration of all religious communities, seem to be aimed at curtailing extremist Islam, but unregistered Christian churches come under attack, too. All unregistered religious activity is banned: religious materials face censorship, new places of worship need approval from the government, founders of religious communities must be Kazakh citizens, and work with young people will become more problematic.

- **Leader:**
President Nursultan Nazarbayev
- **Population:**
16.2 million (1.9 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- For protection on all evangelism and outreach activities, especially amongst young people
- For those involved in distributing Bibles and Christian literature
- For wisdom for church leaders trying to register their churches with the authorities.



BAHRAIN



One of the most liberal countries on the Arabian Peninsula, a large number of expat Christians live here and are relatively free to practise their faith privately. However, society does not tolerate conversion from Islam to other religions. Families and communities sometimes subject converts to physical abuse. Government persecution has decreased in general as they are preoccupied with maintaining political stability. In early 2011, pro-democracy protests were put down by Saudi Arabian troops called in by the government.

- **Leader:**
King Sheikh Hamad
- **Population:**
1.3 million (65,000 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Constitutional monarchy

Pray

- There are two Christian bookshops and several Christian hospitals here. Pray for opportunities for the gospel to be shared
- The import and distribution of Bibles is not restricted. Pray that God's Word will spread
- That the relative freedom of expression in this country will not be threatened by political instability.



COLOMBIA



Large areas of the country are under the control of drug cartels and paramilitary groups. Most Christian persecution comes from the alliances that exist between non-Christian indigenous population and paramilitaries, who view Christians who openly oppose their activities as a threat. At least five Christians were martyred in 2011, but the real numbers are probably much higher. In February a pastor and two of his relatives were killed by rebel groups in retaliation for the growth of the church.

- **Leader:**
President Juan Manuel Santos
- **Population:**
47 million (44 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Christianity (Roman Catholicism)
- **Government:**
Republic



Pray

- For protection for pastors seeking to share the gospel in their communities
- For Open Doors' children's centre, which provides safety and an education for children of Christians targeted by rebel groups
- Remember the families of those murdered and those who have been forced to relocate for their own safety.



KYRGYZSTAN



The country's first free and fair elections in October 2011 gave Kyrgyzstan the opportunity to grant minorities legal standing. However, the government's disregard for believers' freedom continues. Strict religious laws introduced in 2009 are still in force, making it almost impossible for churches to register. Christians are monitored by the state, Islamic clergy and neighbourhood committees. Conversion to Christianity is prohibited. Believers face physical abuse and attacks on their meeting places and homes.

- **Leader:**
President Almazbek Atambayev
- **Population:**
5.4 million (292,500 Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Republic

Pray

- Christian literature is censored. Pray for those involved in distributing Bibles and training resources
- Christian education for children is limited. Pray for opportunities for children to hear the gospel through outreach events
- Praise God that the elections in 2011 were free and fair. Pray for a corresponding change of attitude in society towards Christianity.



BANGLADESH



Amendments to the constitution are being proposed which seek to restore certain aspects of secularism, but for the Christian minority, little change is expected. In general, believers have freedom to worship. However, conversion from Islam is considered shameful and evangelising Muslims is risky. Local authorities and the Muslim majority may disturb church meetings or put believers under pressure. There were reports of Christians being physically harmed, and homes or meeting places attacked.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
- **Population:**
150.5 million (1.4 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Parliamentary democracy



Pray

- Praise God that a believer who stood trial for distributing Christian literature near a major Muslim gathering was exonerated by the court
- For Muslim-background believers – especially women, who face increased physical and emotional abuse
- For Open Doors' literacy programmes, which reach many believers and non-believers in rural areas.



MALAYSIA



Malay believers face growing hostility from the government and Islamic fundamentalists, and established churches are under threat. The law restricts conversion of Malay Muslims to other religions. In five states, it is a criminal offence that can be punished by a fine or a jail term. There have been reports of Muslim-background believers facing arrest or physical assault. In August 2011, 5000 demonstrators joined a rally against the Christian minority after rumours spread about a Christian plan to convert the whole country.

- **Leader:**
Prime Minister Najib Razak
- **Population:**
28.9 million (2.6 million Christians)
- **Main Religion:**
Islam
- **Government:**
Federal constitutional monarchy

Pray

- For Malay believers facing opposition from their families or the authorities
- That pastors would find ways to share Christ with seekers in ways that do not offend religious sensitivities
- In September 2011 the government announced that Malay-language Bibles could be printed locally. Pray that God's Word would spread.



Index of countries

Country	Ranking
Afghanistan	2
Algeria	23
Azerbaijan	25
Bahrain	46
Bangladesh	49
Belarus	42
Bhutan	17
Brunei	28
Burma (Myanmar)	33
Chechnya	20
China	21
Colombia	47
Comoros	24
Cuba	41
Djibouti	39
Egypt	15
Eritrea	11
Ethiopia	38
India	32
Indonesia	43
Iran	5
Iraq	9
Jordan	40
Kazakhstan	45
Kuwait	30
Kyrgyzstan	48
Laos	12
Libya	26
Malaysia	50
Maldives	6
Mauritania	14
Morocco	29
North Korea	1
Northern Nigeria	13
Oman	27
Pakistan	10
Palestinian Territories	44
Qatar	22
Saudi Arabia	3
Somalia	4
Sudan	16
Syria	36
Tajikistan	34
Tunisia	35
Turkey	31
Turkmenistan	18
United Arab Emirates	37
Uzbekistan	7
Vietnam	19
Yemen	8