

Turkmenistan

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On The World Watch List

“He’s not healed yet after prison. He still has nightmares and feels fearful.”

– Yousef*, a believer in Turkmenistan whose Christian relative was imprisoned.

Score: 70/100

Very High

Violence:		10%
Church Life:		94%
National Life:		80%
Community Life:		83%
Family Life:		68%
Private Life:		87%

Region:	Central Asia
Leader:	President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow
Persecution Level:	Very High
Christian Population:	68,000 (1.1%)
Main Religion:	Islam
Source of Persecution:	Dictatorial Paranoia

Turkmenistan has been called the ‘North Korea’ of Central Asia. Laws forbid private worship and ban all religious activity by unregistered organisations. Believers are constantly monitored and Christian materials are often confiscated.

The Government’s Eyes

Persecution against Christians in Turkmenistan comes from both the government and the Islamic community. There are many restrictions on church life. Unless a church is registered, Christians are at risk of police raids, threats, arrests and fines. However, even Russian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches – who are registered – may have their Sunday services monitored. The government also restricts the printing or importing of Christian materials in Turkmenistan.

The Risk For New Believers

Christians who have come from a Muslim background experience intense pressure from their families, friends and villagers to deny their faith. Whilst government oppression is prevalent right across the country, these Muslim background believers in rural areas experience greater persecution.

*Name changed for security purposes.

How can we pray for Turkmenistan?

Pray for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of church leaders as they cope with intense pressure.

Pray that Christians who have come from a Muslim background will be bold in sharing Jesus with their families and hold onto their faith despite the pressure.

Pray the church can access the Bible and other Christian material to help them grow in their faith.

Download the full WWL report at opendoors.org.au/resources or opendoors.org.nz/resources