

Injustice: Persecuted Church

In Brief

- **North Korea (1)** tops the World Watch List for the 18th year in a row. Despite its ranking in the top slot it did free three Korean-American Christians from a North Korean prison.
- Persecution of Christians is getting worse. Five years ago only one country - North Korea - was ranked in the 'extreme' category for its level of persecution of Christians. This year, 11 countries score enough to fit that category.
- **China (27)** has risen 16 places in the list after new Regulations for Religious Affairs came into force in February 2018.
- In **Myanmar (18)** tens of thousands of members of the Karen tribe - a majority-Christian ethnic tribe - have been killed and least 120,000 displaced.
- **India (10)** has entered the top ten for the first time. The BJP-led government continues to promote an extremist militant Hindu agenda.
- In **Turkey (26)** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been stirring up ultra-nationalistic sentiment for some time and this has caused added difficulties for Christians in Turkey, especially Evangelicals.
- As radical Islam has been forced out of the Middle East, it has spread into sub-Saharan Africa. Almost 30 violent Islamic extremist groups are known to be active in the region.
- Islamic militants also have also gained strength in failed states like **Somalia (3)**, **Libya (4)** and **Yemen (8)**, where they continue to recruit, and capture pockets of territory.
- The two places where Christians suffer the most violence are **Nigeria (12)** and **Pakistan (5)**.

Three Main Trends

- Authoritarian states are clamping down and using legal regulations to control religion. (North Korea, China, Myanmar and Vietnam)
- Ultra-nationalists are depicting Christians as 'alien' or 'western' and trying to drive them out. (India, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal and Turkey)
- Radical Islam has moved from the Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa.

Prayer

Before praying remember that there is **nowhere God is absent, powerless or irrelevant**; no situation in the universe in the face of which God is at a loss. (Rowan Williams)

"Father,

As one Church, united by Jesus, and knowing that we are all one family in Christ;

We pray for those who suffer in your name all over the world, our brothers and sisters, who share in that same great gift of salvation through your son, but who face injustice, oppression and even death because of their faith in you.

We pray knowing that you are a God of compassion, comfort, and justice; who always hears their prayers, never leaves them and will forever be their fortress and shield, whatever they face.

We pray that you will grant them strength, courage, and protection from those who seek to harm them because they follow you; guidance and wisdom for when their path seems impossible to tread, and hope for a future where they have the freedom to worship you without fear.

In the name of Jesus, Amen"

Practical ways to help

Give - <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/donate/covid-19-appeal/?donationid=c08662af-e677-ea11-a82a-000d3a2cff99&campid=AP2003/WB4>

Write to someone experiencing persecution - <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/letter/>

Speak out by becoming an advocate - <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/about/how-we-help/advocacy/>