

World
Watch
Research

Short version of WWL methodology



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Update: October 2023

Revised to include 7.2 in Appendix (1 Dec 2023)

© 2023 Open Doors International

www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/

www.opendoorsanalytical.org (password: freedom)

Short version of World Watch List methodology

- October 2023

This document is intended for quick reference purposes. It provides background information for a basic understanding of the World Watch List (WWL) scoring system and of the terminology used in the WWL Full Country Dossiers. For further details please consult the “Complete WWL Methodology” available at:

- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/> (password: freedom).

Copyright note

This document is the property of World Watch Research (WWR), the research department within Open Doors International. It may be used and distributed free of charge, but please always acknowledge the source: © 2023 Open Doors International.

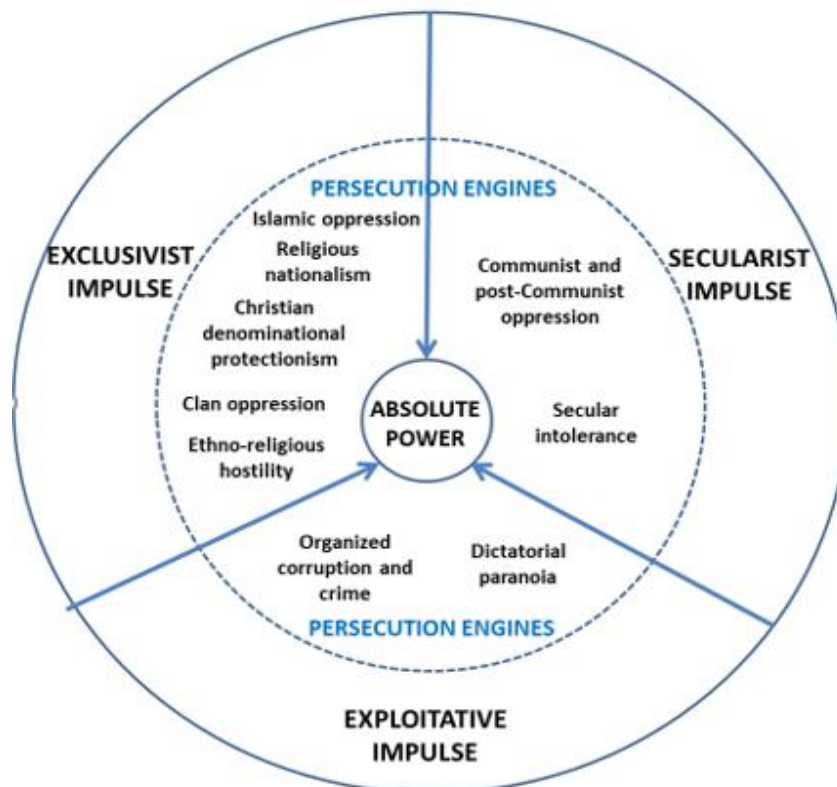
Contents

1. WWL background philosophy	2
2. Definition of persecution	3
3. How the World Watch List is compiled.....	4
Appendix 1: WWL Questionnaire Questions for Blocks 1-6 (scored) and Block 7 (unscored).....	8
Appendix 2: WWL Scoring example	15
Appendix 3: Definition of Christian and categories of Christian communities	20
Appendix 4: Explanation of the 5 spheres of life and violence	21
Appendix 5: Explanation of the nine Persecution engines	24
Appendix 6: List of Drivers of persecution	29
Appendix 7: Understanding the Persecution pattern	31

1. WWL background philosophy

Persecution situations are usually highly complex and it is not always clear if and to what extent pressure felt by Christians or even violence against them is directly related to their Christian faith. Basically, persecution is related to religions, ideologies or corrupted mind-sets, i.e. elementary human impulses seeking exclusive power in society. WWL methodology considers these impulses to be the power sources behind nine different “Persecution engines” (see Appendix 5).

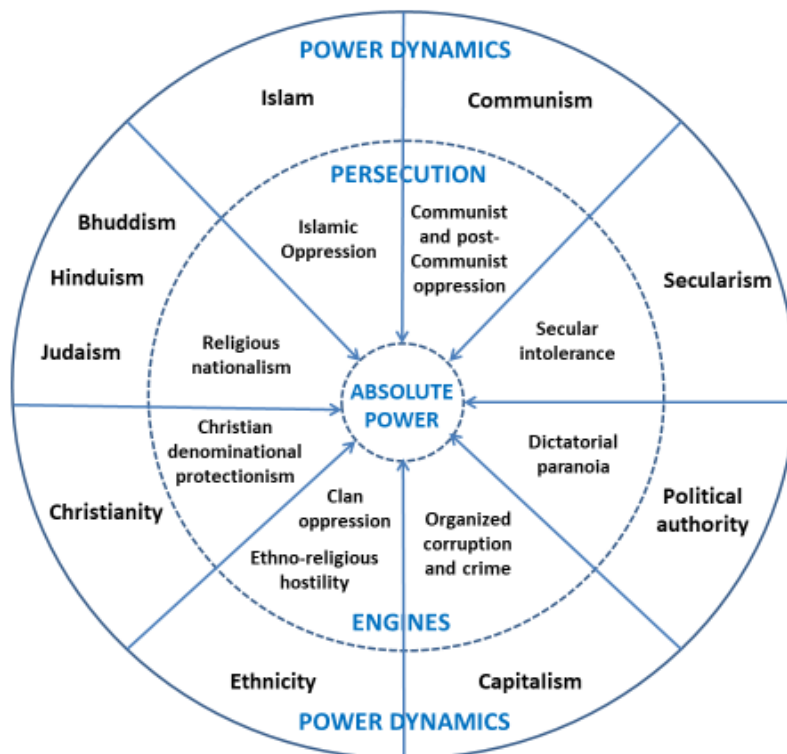
Diagram 1: Persecution engines act as vehicles for different elementary human impulses seeking absolute power.



World Watch Research uses the term “Persecution engine” to describe a distinct situation which is causing Christians to be persecuted either violently or non-violently. This situation of persecution can be considered as the consequence of a societal “power dynamic”. A power dynamic normally represents a worldview that has a claim of superiority over other worldviews. That is not a problem in itself, as long as this power dynamic is coupled with a true sense of pluralism. When this is not the case, the drivers of the power dynamic will strive for absolute submission of society to their worldview. The drivers of the power dynamic are often smaller (radical) groups within the broader group of adherents of that worldview, who are not necessarily representative of that broader group, but who get sufficient space to maneuver towards their aim. Examples of power dynamics are Secularism, Islam and Communism (see Diagram 2).

WWR has defined 9 Persecution engines corresponding to their related background power dynamics, as illustrated in the diagram below. These Persecution engines each display their own brand of hostility towards Christians and are central both for scoring the WWL questionnaires and for the analysis of the persecution of Christians and their communities.

Diagram 2: Nine Persecution engines and their corresponding societal Power dynamics



2. Definition of persecution

There is no international, legal definition of persecution. Situations can be defined as persecution where persons experience the denial of the rights listed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, WWL methodology has opted for a theological rather than a sociological definition:

Any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The definition of "Christian" and the "Categories of Christian communities" used by World Watch Research can be found in Appendix 3.

3. How the World Watch List is compiled

WWL has been gathering and publishing detailed data on the persecution of Christians since 1992. WWL methodology has gradually evolved since the 1990s and was comprehensively revised in 2012 in order to provide greater credibility, transparency, objectivity and academic quality. Further refinements are regularly made.

WWL methodology distinguishes between two main expressions of persecution: *Squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *Smash* (plain violence). While *Smash* can be measured and tracked through the reporting of concrete incidents, *Squeeze* is documented by discerning how Christian life and witness is placed under pressure in 5 specific spheres of life (see Appendix 4).

After a series of initial research enquiries, a questionnaire consisting of 84 scored questions (covering the reporting period – currently 1 October to 30 September) is filled out by researchers in (and those externally involved with) countries where persecution takes place. All questions used per *sphere of life* and *violence* (Blocks 1-6) can be found in Appendix 1, including a further 16 questions (requiring a paragraph of descriptive text giving background information) which make up Block 7 of the questionnaire. The answers to Block 7 questions are not used for scoring but for country dossier analysis.

KEY FACT:

Grassroots level information is gathered wherever possible

For each country being researched, violence data and detailed descriptions of pressure on Christians are supplied by:

- **In-country networks** – who contribute as much grassroots level information as possible.
- **Open Doors country researchers** – who assemble input from their in-country networks, add their own expertise and fill out WWL questionnaires for the specific countries under research.
- **External experts** – who provide information which can be used for cross-checking the filled-out country questionnaires.
- **WWL analysts** – who combine the above research with their own monitoring results and compile a final version of the completed questionnaire for each country.

The questions in Blocks 1 to 5 of the WWL questionnaire are not answered with a simple yes or no. A set of variables are taken into consideration:

- 1) The number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution (max. 4 points);
- 2) The proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (max. 4 points);
- 3) The intensity of persecution (max. 4 points);
- 4) The frequency of persecution (max. 4 points).

A scoring grid - see Diagram 3 below - is used to convert the descriptive questionnaire answers into numbers. A score for each Block question is calculated¹ from the average of the number of points recorded for each of the four variables.

KEY FACT:
The scoring grid converts descriptive information into numbers

Diagram 3: WWL scoring grid

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
(1) Number of categories of Christian communities affected ²	None	1 out of 4	2 out of 4 <i>but see footnote 2</i>	3 out of 4 <i>but see footnote 2</i>	4 out of 4 <i>but see footnote 2</i>
(2) Proportion of general population in territory affected	None	Above 0% – 25%	26% – 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
(3) Intensity ³	None	Low	Medium	High	Very high
(4) Frequency	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent	Permanent

The resulting score for each question thus contributes to the overall score for pressure in the question’s relevant Block. With the overall score for each Block calculated, the levels of pressure in the corresponding ‘Spheres of life’ (e.g. Block 1 = Private life; Block 2 = Family life etc.) can be clearly presented. Different *persecution engines* (see list in Appendix 5), *persecution drivers* (see

¹ See scoring example in Appendix 2.

² If all four categories of Christian communities (CCCs) exist in a country, each category affected receives one point. However, it often occurs that not all CCCs are present in a country and/or not all of them are affected by the persecution covered by the Block question. The scoring for this variable is then calculated according to the following table:

Points	Number of categories of Christian communities (CCCs) affected by persecution			
	4 CCCs are present in the country	3 CCCs are present in the country	2 CCCs are present in the country	1 CCC is present in the country
1	1 out of 4 affected	-	-	-
2	2 out of 4 affected	1 out of 3 affected	1 out of 2 affected	-
3	3 out of 4 affected	2 out of 3 affected	-	-
4	4 out of 4 affected	3 out of 3 affected	2 out of 2 affected	1 out of 1 affected

³ Detailed definitions of ‘Low - Very high’ and ‘Sporadic - Permanent’ can be found in Section 3.1 of the Complete WWL methodology available at: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/> (password: freedom).

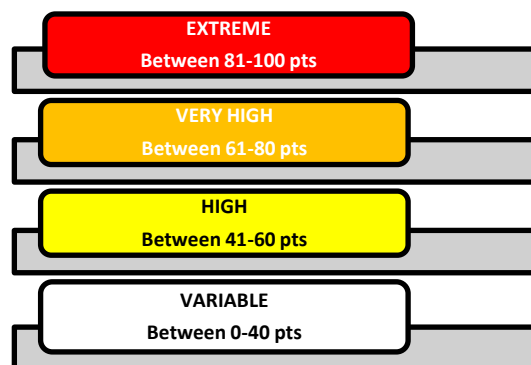
list in Appendix 6) and a distinct *persecution pattern* (see Appendix 7) become visible for analysis.

Please note: In Block 6 of the questionnaire a different scoring system is used: The first two questions, which deal with killings of Christians and attacks on churches and other Christian buildings, are scored up to a maximum of 30 points each. The other 10 questions together share a maximum total of 30 points.

KEY FACT:
The WWL scoring method makes it possible to compare countries with very different persecution situations

A final score is calculated for each country which is then used to determine the order of countries scoring 41 points or more (i.e. countries experiencing high, very high or extreme levels of persecution) in the annually published World Watch List (see below: Diagram 4). An audit is made by the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF)⁴ to confirm that all results have been calculated in accordance with WWL methodology.

Diagram 4: Persecution categories with scoring intervals



Despite their differing persecution situations, this scoring method makes a comparison between countries possible. It is possible because the methodological starting-point focusses on what Christians are experiencing in their daily life (Blocks 1-4) and what difficulties the Church is facing on a daily basis (Block 5). Violent incidents (all recorded in Block 6) can occur in any of the Spheres of life (Blocks 1-5).

Thus, for instance, a country in which the main Persecution engine is *Islamic oppression* can be compared with a country where *Organized corruption and crime* is dominant.

Diagram 5 below shows the Block and overall scores for the five highest ranking countries in the WWL 2023 reporting period.

⁴ Information about IIRF can be found at: <https://www.iirf.eu/>.

Diagram 5: Extract from WWL 2023 showing block and total scores

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score to 3 decimal places
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	97.779
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.7	92	91.620
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.9	89	89.261
4	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.7	12.2	89	88.788
5	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.1	16.3	9.1	88	88.463

The most important reason for ranking countries is to be able to present a complex reality to the broader public. However, WWL rankings only offer a valid comparison between countries scored in the same WWL reporting period; if different WWL reporting periods are being compared then only the final scores make a valid comparison possible. Both ranking and final score must always be viewed in conjunction with the corresponding WWL Full Country Dossier which individually explains the persecution situation of a country in more depth.⁵

FURTHER READING

The methodology described here can be studied in more depth using the annually updated “Complete WWL Methodology” available at:

- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/>;
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/> (password: freedom).

Other useful background documents available at the same links are:

- Distinctive elements of WWL Methodology
- WWL - FAQs
- WWL - Discussion of key themes
- Appropriate use of WWL data

⁵ WWL Full Country Dossiers of all countries scoring 41 points or more are available at: <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/country-dossiers/> and <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/country-dossiers/> (password: freedom).

Appendix 1:

WWL Questionnaire Questions for Blocks 1-6 (scored) and Block 7 (unscored)

Block 1: Private life	
1.1	Has conversion been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another?
1.2	Has it been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.)?
1.3	Has it been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials?
1.4	Has it been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.)?
1.5	Has it been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols?
1.6	Has it been risky for Christians to access Christian radio or TV, or Christian material on the Internet?
1.7	Has it been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with <i>immediate</i> family members?
1.8	Has it been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those <i>other than immediate</i> family (extended family, others)?
1.9	Has it been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians?
1.10	Have Christians been isolated from other family members or other like-minded Christians (e.g. house arrest)?

Block 2: Family life	
2.1	Have babies and children of Christians automatically been registered under the state or majority religion?
2.2	Has registering the birth, wedding, death, etc. of Christians been hindered or made impossible?
2.3	Have Christians been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons?
2.4	Have Christian baptisms been hindered?
2.5	Have burials of Christians been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites?
2.6	Have Christian couples been hindered in adopting children or serving as foster parents because of their faith?
2.7	Have parents been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs?

2.8	Have Christian children been pressured to attend anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education?
2.9	Have children of Christians been harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' faith?
2.10	Have Christian spouses and/or children of Christians been subject to separation for prolonged periods of time by circumstances relating to persecution?
2.11	Have spouses of converts been put under pressure (successfully or unsuccessfully) by others to divorce?
2.12	Have Christian spouses of non-Christians been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases?
2.13	Have Christians lost their inheritance rights because of their conversion to Christianity or (if a person already was a Christian) other types of Christianity?

Block 3: Community life

3.1	Have Christians been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (e.g. for not meeting majority religion or traditional dress codes, beard codes etc.)?
3.2	Have Christians been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.)?
3.3	Have Christians been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage?
3.4	Have Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water)?
3.5	Have Christians been put under pressure to take part in non-Christian religious ceremonies or community events?
3.6	Have Christians been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons?
3.7	Have Christians been pressured by their community to renounce their faith?
3.8	Have Christians had less access to health care because of their faith?
3.9	Have Christians faced disadvantages in their education at any level for faith-related reasons (e.g. restrictions of access to education)?
3.10	Have Christians been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons?
3.11	Have Christians been hindered in the operation of their businesses for faith-related reasons (e.g. access to loans, subsidies, government contracts, client boycotts)?
3.12	Have Christians been fined for faith-related reasons (e.g. <i>jizya</i> tax, community tax, protection money)?

3.13	Have Christians been interrogated or compelled to report to the local vigilante/police for faith-related reasons?
-------------	---

Block 4: National life

4.1	Does the Constitution (or comparable basic national or state law) limit freedom of religion as formulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Please note it may well be that there are contradictions in laws.
4.2	Have officials at any level refused to recognize an individual's conversion as recorded in government administration systems, identity cards, etc.?
4.3	Have Christians been forced by law or in practice to act against their conscience, e.g. regarding military service or in certain professions?
4.4	Have Christians been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons?
4.5	Have Christians been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons?
4.6	Have Christians been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons?
4.7	Have Christians been hindered in running their own businesses without interference for faith-related reasons (e.g. personnel policy, client admission policy)?
4.8	Have Christians been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public?
4.9	Have Christian civil society organizations or political parties been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions?
4.10	Has media reporting been incorrect or biased against Christians?
4.11	Have Christians been subject to smear campaigns or hate speech?
4.12	Have Christians, churches or Christian organizations been hindered in publicly displaying religious symbols?
4.13	Have Christians been accused of blasphemy or insulting the majority religion, either by state authorities or by pressure groups?
4.14	Have those who caused harm to Christians deliberately been left unpunished?
4.15	Have Christians accused in court been deprived of equal treatment?
4.16	Has international monitoring been hindered when Christians had to stand trial?

Block 5: Church life	
5.1	Have activities of churches been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed?
5.2	Has it been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government?
5.3	Have Christian communities been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier?
5.4	Have churches been hindered from organizing Christian activities <i>inside</i> their place of worship?
5.5	Have churches been hindered from organizing Christian activities <i>outside</i> church buildings?
5.6	Has work among youth in particular been restricted?
5.7	Have churches been hindered from openly integrating converts?
5.8	Have Christian preaching, teaching and/or published materials been monitored?
5.9	Have Christians experienced interference when choosing their own religious leaders?
5.10	Have Christians been hindered in training their own religious leaders?
5.11	Have pastors or other Christian leaders, or their family members, been special targets of harassment for faith-related reasons?
5.12	Have churches or Christian organizations been hindered in printing Christian materials or owning printing presses?
5.13	Have churches been hindered in importing Christian materials from abroad?
5.14	Has openly selling or distributing Bibles and other Christian materials been hindered?
5.15	Have Bibles and other religious materials held by churches been confiscated or their possession punished?
5.16	Have churches, Christian organizations, institutions or groups been prevented from using mass media to present their faith (e.g. via local or national radio, TV, Internet, social media, cell phones)?
5.17	Have churches, Christian organizations or institutions been hindered in expressing or putting into practice their convictions on marital and family arrangements?
5.18	Have churches been hindered in establishing, managing, maintaining and conducting schools, or charitable, humanitarian, medical, social or cultural organizations, institutions and associations?
5.19	Have churches been hindered in their interaction with the global church (both foreigners visiting and nationals being able to visit Christians in other countries, attend conferences etc.)
5.20	Has it been risky for churches or Christian organizations to speak out against instigators of persecution?

Block 6: Violence

Violence is defined as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse).

6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?
6.2	How many churches or public Christian properties (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?
6.3	How many Christians have been detained without trial for faith-related reasons?
6.4	How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons?
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused (including beatings and death-threats) for faith-related reasons?
6.9	How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?
6.10	How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?
6.11	How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?
6.12	How many Christians have been forced to leave their country for faith-related reasons?

Block 7: Additional questions (unscored)

7.1	<p>As to changes that you are observing in this country: In which direction have changes occurred in this country regarding the treatment of Christians and/or the churches, over the past 12 months?</p> <p>To answer, please click on one of the following options:</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Worsening rapidly <input type="radio"/> Worsening <input type="radio"/> No change <input type="radio"/> Worsened in some parts but improved in others <input type="radio"/> Improving <input type="radio"/> Improving rapidly </p> <p>Please clarify your answer:</p>
7.2	<p>As to the growth of the Church: How would you describe the growth of the Church in this country over the past 12 months?</p> <p>To answer, please click on one of the following options:</p>

	<p> <input type="radio"/> Growing rapidly <input type="radio"/> Growing slowly <input type="radio"/> No significant change <input type="radio"/> Growth in some parts, decrease in others <input type="radio"/> Shrinking slowly <input type="radio"/> Shrinking rapidly </p> <p>Please clarify your answer:</p>
7.3	<p>As to the numbers of Christians killed for their faith: How would you summarize changes to the number of Christians killed in the country, over the past 12 months?</p> <p>To answer, please click on one of the following options</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> More killed <input type="radio"/> Less killed <input type="radio"/> No significant change </p> <p>Please clarify your answer:</p>
7.4	<p>As to the imprisonment of Christians: How would you summarize changes to the number of imprisoned Christians in the country, over the past 12 months?</p> <p>To answer, please click on one of the following options:</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> More imprisoned <input type="radio"/> Less imprisoned <input type="radio"/> No significant change </p> <p>Please clarify your answer:</p>
7.5	<p>As to the level of fear among the Christians: How would you describe the level of fear among Christians in this country?</p> <p>To answer, please click on one of the following options</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Very high <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Low <input type="radio"/> Very Low </p> <p>Please clarify your answer:</p>
7.6	<p>As to the evolution of the level of fear among Christians: How would you describe the evolution in the level of fear among Christians in this country over the past 12 months?</p> <p>To answer, please click on one of the following options</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Growing rapidly <input type="radio"/> Growing slowly <input type="radio"/> No significant change <input type="radio"/> Growth in some parts, decrease in others <input type="radio"/> Shrinking slowly <input type="radio"/> Shrinking rapidly </p> <p>Please clarify your answer:</p>
7.7	To which forms of persecution are men and boys particularly subject?
7.8	To which forms of persecution are women and girls particularly subject?
7.9	Are there any laws or accepted practices in your context which make Christian women and girls more vulnerable to persecution?
7.10	Are there ways in which the persecution of men and boys particularly affects Christian families and communities?
7.11	Are there ways in which the persecution of women and girls particularly affects Christian families and communities?

7.12	Are there any "early warning" signs in this country indicating that the churches or individual Christians may suffer more persecution in the future than at present?
7.13	Are there any issues regarding persecution that are specific to this country and are not covered by any of the questions in this questionnaire?
7.14	Do you have any detailed information on non-Christian religious minorities in the country who have been marginalized or persecuted? Which other groups in the country have been persecuted on the same level or even harder than Christians?
7.15	<p>What have been the most important general changes in the country? Your answer could be structured in line with the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the most important political changes in the country, and how have these changes influenced religious freedom or persecution of Christians? • What have been the most important economic changes in the country, and how have these changes influenced religious freedom or persecution of Christians? • What have been the most important social changes in the country, and how have these changes influenced religious freedom or persecution of Christians? • What have been the most important technological changes in the country, and how have these changes influenced religious freedom or persecution of Christians? • What have been the most important religious changes in the country, and how have these changes influenced religious freedom or persecution of Christians? • What have been the most important legal changes in the country, and how have these changes influenced religious freedom or persecution of Christians?
7.16	Room for further comments

Appendix 2:

WWL Scoring example

The following shows how the country scores and rankings are calculated for the annually published World Watch List.

1. Background details required prior to scoring

For each country, the persecution engines, drivers of persecution and Christian communities affected are first identified.

2. Six blocks of questions for each country are answered and scored

The WWR research analyst uses the information gathered from all the In-country networks, Open Doors researchers and External experts who have filled out a WWL-Questionnaire, to now answer and score the six blocks of questions for each country. Altogether there are 84 questions to answer and score. (A further 16 questions are asked for gathering background information in Block 7, but these are not included in the scoring process.)

Block 1: Private Life *(10 questions)*

Block 2: Family Life *(13 questions)*

Block 3: Community Life *(13 questions)*

Block 4: National Life *(16 questions)*

Block 5: Church Life *(20 questions)*

Block 6: Physical Violence *(12 questions)*

3. An example showing the background considerations for answering and scoring ONE of the questions in Blocks 1-5

The score for each question can range between 0 and 16 points. **For the purposes of example, we have chosen the third question in Block 1 (Private Life):**

“1.3 Has it been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials?”

Please click on most appropriate answer

 Yes
 No
 N/A
 Unknown

“No” = 0 points.

“Yes” = scoring is required taking 4 further factors into consideration.⁶ Each of these four factors can get a maximum of 4 points as shown in the following table:

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
(1) Number of categories of Christian communities affected	None	1 out of 4	2 out of 4	3 out of 4	4 out of 4
(2) Proportion of general population in territory affected	None	Above 0% – 25%	26% – 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
(3) Intensity	None	Low	Medium	High	Very high
(4) Frequency	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent	Permanent

In this imaginary WWL country, we shall say “Yes” - with the following scoring:

(1) Number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution

In the imaginary WWL country, the danger to privately own or keep Christian materials mainly concerns three categories of Christian communities i.e. the historical Christian communities, converts to Christianity and non-traditional Christian communities:

“3 out of 4 categories affected” = 3 points.

(2) Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution

In the imaginary WWL country, the danger applies in the whole territory, so the proportion of the general population living in that territory is 100%:

“76-100% of population” = 4 points.

(3) Intensity = the degree of persecution (or level of pressure) caused by a driver of persecution.

1 point - low:	The issue in question can be dealt with or processed quite easily;
2 points - medium:	The issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with more difficulty than if it were low;
3 points - high:	The issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with difficulty;
4 points - very high:	The issue in question can only be dealt with or processed with very great difficulty.

⁶ A fifth factor giving gender-specific information is also answered for each of the 84 questions in Blocks 1-6. However, this is not scored. For each question the researcher is required to indicate if the situation involves: Only men / mostly men / both equally / mostly women / only women / unknown / n/a.

The consequences of discovery in the imaginary WWL country are severe: “high intensity” = 3 points.

(4) Frequency = the rate at which incidents of persecution happen.

1 point - sporadic:	The issue in question is true, but only every now and then;
2 points - quite frequent:	The issue in question is less often not true than it is true, but is still more true than to say it is sporadically true;
3 points - frequent:	The issue in question is more often true than it is not true, but is not always true;
4 points - permanent:	The issue in question is always true or true with rare exceptions.

The danger is frequent though not permanent in the imaginary WWL country: “frequent” = 3 points.

The total number of points for this question is therefore 3 + 4 + 3 + 3 = 13 (out of a maximum of 16 points).

The average score for this question = $13/4 = 3.250$. (Fractions to 3 decimal places are required.)

4. An example showing the background considerations for obtaining the score for ONE whole block

The process illustrated above for 1.3 is carried out for all questions of the block, and each time the points and average score per question are listed. The table below shows the imaginary scores for our chosen WWL country.

Questions	Points	Average score per question	Block score (max. points 16.667)
1.1	13	3.250	
1.2	13	3.250	
1.3	13	3.250	
1.4	11	2.750	
1.5	11	2.750	
1.6	10	2.500	
1.7	12	3.000	
1.8	15	3.750	
1.9	13	3.250	
1.10	10	2.500	
Total	121	30.250	12.604

In the example above, the total of the average scores for all ten questions in Block 1 = 30.250 (out of a possible maximum of 40.000).

Block 1 is just one of six different blocks contributing to the maximum score of 100 points for all six blocks. So that each block is given the same weighting, they each have a maximum threshold of 16.667 points (=100/6). Since not all blocks have the same number of questions, the FINAL BLOCK SCORE is calculated via the following equation:

FINAL BLOCK SCORE = Total of the average scores per question / Maximum total possible of average scores per question x 100 / 6

Therefore, in our Block 1 example above, the Final Block score = 30.250 / 40.000 x 100 / 6 = 12.604.

5. Final block scores for Blocks 1-5 (denoting “SQUEEZE”) are added together

Blocks 1 to 5 form the ‘squeeze part’ of the questionnaire. The same scoring procedure as shown above for Block 1 is now done for Blocks 2 to 5. For our imaginary WWL country, the resulting table is as follows:

Questions	Block scores
Block 1	12.604
Block 2	10.337
Block 3	9.696
Block 4	10.547
Block 5	12.552
Total for 1-5	55.736

The SQUEEZE in our imaginary WWL country (i.e. the amount of pressure in the Five Spheres of Life) = 55.736.

Now the SMASH needs to be added ...

6. How the points for Violent Incidents within the reporting period are calculated for Block 6

The country score is completed by adding Block 6, which deals with many different forms of physical violence occurring within the WWL reporting period which stretches from 1 November to 31 October. To cover the various forms of violence, a different method of scoring to that used in Blocks 1-5 is required.

The first two questions deal with killings and attacks on churches and can get a maximum of 30 points each. Each killing gives 3 points. Ten or more killings give the maximum number of 30 points.

The other 10 questions dealing with other forms of physical violence can get a maximum of 3 points. The scoring for this is: 1 incident = 1 point; 2 - 9 incidents = 2 points; 10 or more incident = 3 points. The maximum possible number of points for all 12 questions = 90.

In our imaginary WWL country, we have the following reported incidents and points:

	Description of Violent incident per WWL Questionnaire	Incidents	Points	Block score (max. points 16.667)
6.1	Christians killed	0	0	
6.2	Churches attacked	0	0	
6.3	Christians detained without trial	0	0	
6.4	Christians sentenced to jail, labor camp etc.	0	0	
6.5	Christians abducted	0	0	
6.6	Christians raped / sexually harassed	15	3	
6.7	Cases of forced marriages to non-Christians	12	3	
6.8	Christians physically or mentally abused	4	2	
6.9	Houses or other property of Christians attacked	0	0	
6.10	Shops or businesses of Christians attacked	0	0	
6.11	Christians forced to leave their homes / go into hiding in-country	5	2	
6.12	Christians forced to leave their country	0	0	
	Total	36	10	1.852

In the example above, the total number of points for all 12 questions of Block 6 = **10** (out of a possible maximum of 90).

Block 6 is just one of the six blocks contributing to the maximum WWL score of 100 points for all six blocks. So that each block is given the same weighting, they each have a maximum threshold of 16.667 points (=100/6). The FINAL BLOCK 6 SCORE is calculated via the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FINAL BLOCK 6 SCORE} &= \text{Number of points} / \text{Maximum possible number of points for block} \times 100 / 6 \\ &= 10 / 90 \times 100 / 6 = 1.852. \end{aligned}$$

7. Finally, the scores for Blocks 1-5 and Block 6 are added together

To get the final WWL score for a country, all the Block totals are added together. The maximum for each block is 16.667 and the maximum total possible is 100.

Questions	Block scores
Block 1	12.604
Block 2	10.337
Block 3	9.696
Block 4	10.547
Block 5	12.552
Block 6	1.852

Total	57.588
-------	--------

Our imaginary WWL country thus has a final total score rounded to **58 points**. Its ranking on the WWL depends on the number of countries achieving a higher/lower final total score.

WWL RANK	Country	1. Private	2. Family	3. Community	4. National	5. Church	6. Violence	TOTAL SCORE DISPLAYED TO 1 DEC. PLACE	WWL TOTAL SCORE
?	Imaginary country	12.6	10.3	9.7	10.5	12.6	1.9	57.6	58

Appendix 3:

Definition of Christian and Categories of Christian communities

The WWL is a tool focusing on the persecution faced by Christians. WWL methodology defines ‘Christian’ as follows:

Anyone who self-identifies as a Christian and/or someone belonging to a Christian community as defined by the church’s historic creeds.

Based on this definition, WWL methodology distinguishes four Categories of Christian communities:

- 1. Communities of expatriate Christians:** This category applies to a situation in which foreign Christian residents (expatriates or migrant workers) are allowed to rent or own church buildings to a certain degree or at least to conduct church services, but they are not allowed to have contact with nationals regarding Christianity.
- 2. Historical Christian communities:** This category applies to the typical historical churches, such as Catholic, Orthodox and traditional Protestant churches, which have often been part of a country’s history for hundreds of years. Their situation and degree of freedom differ from country to country.
- 3. Converts:** This category focuses on people who once belonged to a dominating religion or ideology, traditional religion, organized crime or other strong identifier and who changed identity in order to become Christian. Converts may be absorbed by one of the other types of churches but often gather in ‘house’ or ‘underground’ churches.⁷
- 4. Non-traditional Christian communities** (such as Evangelical, Baptist and Pentecostal congregations) and/or other Christian communities not included in the above three groups: This category deals with the great variety of new Protestant expressions and includes the independent churches in many countries. Some of them may be disputed by other Christians in terms of having a serious lack of theological orthodoxy but as long

⁷ “Cross-denominational converts” or “church-changers” are Christians who have moved from one category of Christian community to another. They are not normally counted as belonging to the category “Converts”.

as they self-identify as Christians (see definition of Christian) they are included in this category.

Appendix 4:

Explanation of the 5 spheres of life and violence

A ‘five spheres concept’ has been developed to track the various expressions of persecution in the different areas of a Christian’s life. The WWL questionnaire contains questions specific for each sphere and a score is recorded. The maximum for each of the 5 spheres and 1 violence block is 16.667, making a maximum overall score of 100 points when the scores for violence are added.

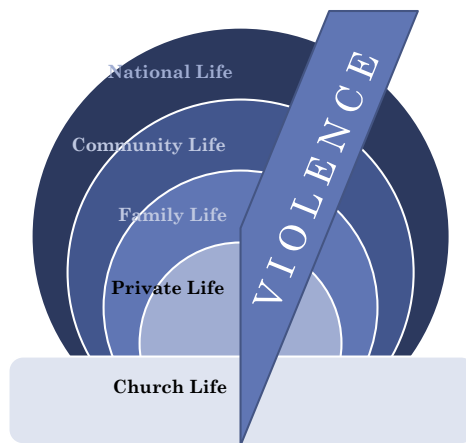
<p>1. Private life</p>	<p>Private life is defined as the inner life of a Christian, the <i>forum internum</i>, the freedom of thought and conscience.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free has a Christian been to relate to God one-on-one in his/her own space?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with conversion, private worship, possession of religious material, freedom of expression (e.g. in spoken word and writing, through images and symbols, access to information and media, privately sharing a belief with others), freedom of private assembly, and isolation of Christians.</p>
<p>2. Family life</p>	<p>Family life is defined as pertaining to the nuclear and extended family of a Christian.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free has a Christian been to live his/her Christian convictions within the circle of the family, and how free have Christian families been to conduct their family life in a Christian way?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with the forced allocation of religious identity, registration of civil affairs, weddings, baptisms, burials, adoptions, child rearing, indoctrination of children, harassment of or discrimination against children, separation of families, isolation of converts, pressure to divorce, custody of children, and inheritance rights.</p>
<p>3. Community life</p>	<p>Community life includes the workplace, business, health care, education, and local public life and civic order.</p>

	<p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live their Christian convictions within the local community (beyond church life), and how much pressure has the community put on Christians by acts of discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with threat or obstruction to daily life, dress codes, monitoring of Christians, abduction and forced marriage, access to community resources, community ceremonies, participation in communal institutions and forums, pressure to renounce faith, access to health care, access to and disadvantages in education, discrimination in employment and obstruction in business, policing issues (fines, interrogations, forced reporting).</p>
<p>4. National life</p>	<p>National life is defined as the interaction between Christians and the nation they live in. This includes rights and laws, the justice system, national public administration and public life.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live their Christian convictions beyond their local community, and how much pressure has the legal system put on Christians, and how much pressure have agents of supra-local life put on Christians by acts of misinformation, discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with national ideology, constitution, registration of religion in IDs, conscientious objection, travel within a country and abroad, discrimination by authorities, barring from public office or professional progress, policy interference with businesses, expression of opinion in public, Christian civil society organizations and political parties, reporting about religious or social conflicts, smear campaigns, toleration of public disrespect, religious symbols, blasphemy accusations, impunity, equal treatment in court and monitoring of trials.</p>
<p>5. Church life</p>	<p>Church life is understood as the collective exercise by Christians of freedom of thought and conscience, particularly as regards uniting with fellow Christians in worship, life, service and public expression of their faith without undue interference. It also pertains to properties owned or used by Christians for these purposes.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How have restrictions, discrimination, harassment or other forms of persecution infringed upon these rights and this collective life of Christian churches, organizations and institutions?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with the hindrance in gathering of Christians, registration of churches, monitoring or closing of unregistered churches, church building and renovation, expropriation and non-return, disturbance or disruption of services, prevention of activities</p>

	inside or outside churches or among youth, acceptance of converts, monitoring of preaching and published materials, election and training of leaders, harassment of leaders or their families, Bibles and other religious materials and their printing, importing, selling or dissemination, and confiscation, broadcasting and Internet use, interference with ethical convictions (regarding family and marriage) and personnel policy of Christian institutions, Christian civil society organizations and social activities, interaction with the global Church, and the denouncing of government persecution.
--	--

Violence is defined as the deprivation of physical freedom or as serious bodily or mental harm to Christians or serious damage to their property and can occur in all spheres of life – as illustrated in the diagram below.

Diagram showing how violence can cut through all spheres of life (© Christof Sauer, IIRF)



Appendix 5: Explanation of the nine Persecution engines

There are different types of Persecution engine, each displaying their own brand of hostility towards Christians. WWL methodology works with 8 categories of Persecution engine – see the explanations for each engine in 5a) below. The WWR researcher assesses what level of influence each engine has on society in the country being analyzed – see 5b) below.

5a) Descriptions of the persecution engines:

1. Islamic oppression

This engine describes the persecution situation where countries, communities and households are being forced under Islamic control. This can be done gradually by a process of systematic Islamization (building up pressure) or suddenly by the use of militant force (violence) or by both together.

- An example of gradual Islamization is found in many countries where the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic NGOs and other likewise groups roll out a holistic Islamic mission strategy, coupled with a ban on conversion at the family and local community level.
- An example of the use of militant force can be seen in groups such as al-Qaeda, the Islamic State group, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab.

The scope of this 'Islamic movement' is global.

2. Religious nationalism

This engine describes the persecution situation where countries, communities or households are being forced under the control of one particular religion (other than Islam). This religion can be Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or some other. The process can be gradual and systematic (via a building-up of pressure) or abrupt (through violence). Often it is the combination of both that increasingly makes life for Christians in the country difficult.

- An example is Hindu mob violence in India. Against the background of ever increasing legislation that curtails religious freedom (e.g. anti-conversion laws), mobs regularly target Christians who witness to their faith in the public domain.

The scope of these ‘religious movements’ is mostly national.

3. *Clan oppression*

This engine describes the persecution situation where a clan or extended family enforces the continuing influence of age-old norms and values or traditional belief systems. (This Persecution engine does not refer to inter-ethnic conflict.) The ‘mechanics’ of this engine is comparable to *Islamic oppression* and *Religious nationalism* - there is often a combination of a gradual building-up of pressure and incidental outright violence.

- An example of subtle pressure is when the authorities of an indigenous community in Myanmar or Mexico refuse to allow a Christian family’s children to attend school.
- An example of outright violence is when Christian families are driven out a village because they do not want to participate in non-Christian traditional ceremonies.

The scope of this ‘ethnic movement’ is mainly subnational (i.e. present in part of a country’s territory) but can involve the crossing of national borders depending on the regional spread of the ethnic people groups.

4. *Ethno-religious hostility*

This engine describes the persecution situation where one ethnic group subjects another ethnic group to hostilities because that group has a different religion. (This Persecution engine does not refer to oppression caused by conversion within the clan.) This engine expresses itself mostly though not exclusively through a multitude of violent confrontations. This can go as far as pushing for religious cleaning meaning that the aggressor is trying to eradicate the presence of the victimized group by all means.

- An example of such violent confrontations is the behavior of Fulani herdsmen in different geo-political zones in Nigeria. Apart from attacking many mostly Christian communities, killing and maiming people, raping women and forcing them to flee their communities, they also proceed to destroy farms and crops so as to make the return of the community members impossible.

The scope of this ‘ethnic movement’ is mainly subnational (i.e. present in part of a country’s territory) but can involve the crossing of national borders depending on the regional spread of the ethnic people groups.

5. *Christian denominational protectionism*

This engine describes the situation where fellow Christians are being persecuted by one church denomination to make sure it remains the only legitimate or dominant expression of Christianity in the country. This engine is comparable to the other engines that are related to religious expressions: It is characterized by a combination of subtle pressure and outright violence, although in practice the balance is more often towards non-violence.

- The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOC) is the oldest and largest Christian community in Eritrea and its leaders do not welcome new forms of Christianity in the country, above all the Pentecostal groups. Leaders of the EOC are known to actively support efforts to limit the growth of other Christian churches.
- In countries such as Egypt, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Christians who leave one Category of Christian Community to join another (e.g. who leave an Orthodox church to join a Pentecostal group) are likely to face hostility at the hands of family members, which can include violence and/or temporary house-arrest.

The scope of this ‘ecclesiastical movement’ is national, especially when the denomination involved has narrow ties with the State.

6. Communist and post-Communist oppression

This engine describes the situation where Christians are being persecuted and churches controlled by a state system that derives from Communist values. Key for controlling churches is a rigid system of state registration and monitoring. Although the engine relies on a combination of pressure and violence, the violence is often not particularly visible because the system has a total and tight hold on the church.

- An example is China. Recent years have shown a growing orthodoxy in Communist ideology under President Xi Jinping’s leadership. The Communist Party’s goal of maintaining power and social harmony includes the control of all religions through tight regulations and a policy of ‘Sinicization’. This includes increased control of the growing Christian minority as well.
- A high prevalence of violence targeting Christians occurs in North Korea via its prison camp system.

The scope of this ideological movement is national, although in the past it was global.

7. Secular intolerance

This engine describes the situation where Christian faith is being forced out of the public domain, if possible even out of the hearts of people. Its drivers seek to transform societies into the mold of a new, radically secularist ethic. This new ethic is (partly) related to a radically new sexual agenda, with norms and values about sexuality, marriage and related issues that are alien to, and resisted by the Christian worldview. When Christian individuals or institutions try to resist this new ethic, they are opposed by (i) non-discrimination legislation, (ii) attacks on parental rights in the area of education, (iii) the censorship of the Cross and other religious symbols from the public square, (iv) the use of various manifestations of “hate-speech” laws to limit the freedom of expression, and (v) church registration laws. Most of this is not violent, although both pastors and other Christians have been arrested at times.

- An example of this engine is compulsory sexual education based on secularist gender ideology and incorporating LGBT+ content in nursery and primary schools

in some countries, and the serious threats targeting parents who wish to withdraw their young children from these lessons.

The scope of this 'secularist movement' is global.

8. Dictatorial paranoia

This engine describes the persecution situation where an authoritarian government at different levels of society, assisted by social stakeholder groups, does all it can to maintain power. There is no special focus on realizing an ideological vision; it seems lust for power and the benefits it brings with it are decisive. The dynamics of this engine are comparable to Communist and post-Communist oppression: Although the engine relies on a combination of pressure and violence, often the threat of violence is sufficient to force the non-state controlled Church underground.

- Example: The government of Eritrea has been placing churches in Eritrea under increasing control. It began by reacting very strongly against the new Christian communities (e.g. imprisoning Christians from non-traditional groups in shipping containers), but has continued by putting increasing pressure on the Eritrean Orthodox Church (e.g. through curtailing clergy activity).

The scope of this engine is national.

9. Organized corruption and crime

This engine describes the persecution situation where groups or individuals are creating a climate of impunity, anarchy and corruption as a means for self-enrichment. It has two main 'branches': (i) corruption within state structures and (ii) corruption of society by organized crime. This engine expresses itself through a combination of systematic pressure caused by the fear of possible violent repercussions in the case of non-compliance, and by such violence being carried out.

- Corruption from within: Princes in Saudi Arabia are often free to do what they want. The country is theirs. The trade-off is giving radical Islamic forces a high level of influence both within and outside the country. The negative effect of this on Christians worldwide is enormous through the spread of Wahhabism (a radical strand of Islam) in moderate Muslim countries.
- Organized crime: In Latin American countries such as Colombia and Mexico, criminal groups (involved in drug and/or human trafficking etc.) use violence to keep the Church under control, especially at the level of the local community. At national level the interests of these groups are served by co-opting politicians and the security apparatus of the state.

The scope of this engine is global.

5b) Assessing the level of influence of each Persecution engine on society:

Categorization of persecution engines					
	VERY WEAK	WEAK	MEDIUM	STRONG	VERY STRONG
Country	Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is less than 11 points	Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is between 11 - 25 points	Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is between 26 - 40 points	Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is between 41 - 60 points	Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is 61 points or more
Persecution engine 1					
Persecution engine 2					
Persecution engine 3					
Etc....					

Appendix 6:

List of Drivers of persecution

The term “drivers of persecution (engines)” is used to describe people and/or groups causing hostilities towards Christians in a particular country. WWR distinguishes 12 drivers, as listed below in 6a). Additionally, the WWR analyst assesses the level of influence the drivers of each persecution engine exert in the country being researched – see 6b) below.

6a) Descriptions of the drivers:

1. Government officials at any level from local to national

E.g. teachers, police, local officials, presidents, Kim Jong Un

2. Ethnic group leaders

E.g. tribal chiefs

3. Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national

E.g. imams, rabbis, senior Buddhist monks

4. Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national

E.g. popes, patriarchs, bishops, priests, pastors

5. Violent religious groups:

E.g. Boko Haram (Nigeria), Hamas (Palestinian Territories), *Bodu Bala Sena* (BBS) and the *Sinhala Ravaya* (SR) (both in Sri Lanka)

6. Ideological pressure groups:

E.g. LGBT+ rights groups, Abortion Rights UK, National Secular Society

7. Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs

E.g. students, neighbors, shopkeepers, mobs

8. Extended family

E.g. one’s direct family members or the wider circle of kinsmen.

9. Political parties at any level from local to national

E.g. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, AKP in Turkey

10. Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups

E.g. FARC in Colombia

11. Organized crime cartels or networks

E.g. There are several cartels in Latin America, Italy and other parts of the world.

12. Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN/OIC) and embassies

E.g. UN organizations pushing for compulsory sexual education programs contrary to Christian values, OIC pushing for Islamization of the African continent.

6b) Assessing the level of influence the drivers of each persecution engine exert:

Categorization of drivers of persecution					
First persecution engine:					
	VERY WEAK	WEAK	MEDIUM	STRONG	VERY STRONG
Country / persecution engine 1	This driver affects Christians only slightly (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians in a limited way but more than slightly (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians in a way that is more than limited but not yet strongly negative (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians strongly in a negative way (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians very strongly in a negative way (in the context of this persecution engine).
Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is [put here result of foregoing tab for that specific persecution engine]					
Government officials at any level from local to national					
Ethnic group leaders					
Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national					
Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national					
Violent religious groups					
Ideological pressure groups					
Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs					
Extended family					
Political parties at any level from local to national					
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups					
Organized crime cartels or networks					
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN/OIC) and embassies					
Second persecution engine:					
	VERY WEAK	WEAK	MEDIUM	STRONG	VERY STRONG
Country / persecution engine 2	This driver affects Christians only slightly (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians in a limited way but more than slightly (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians in a way that is more than limited but not yet strongly negative (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians strongly in a negative way (in the context of this persecution engine).	This driver affects Christians very strongly in a negative way (in the context of this persecution engine).
Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is [put here result of foregoing tab for that specific persecution engine]					
Government officials at any level from local to national					
Ethnic group leaders					
Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national					
Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national					
Violent religious groups					
Ideological pressure groups					
Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs					
Extended family					
Political parties at any level from local to national					
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups					
Organized crime cartels or networks					
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN/OIC) and embassies					
Etc. etc.					

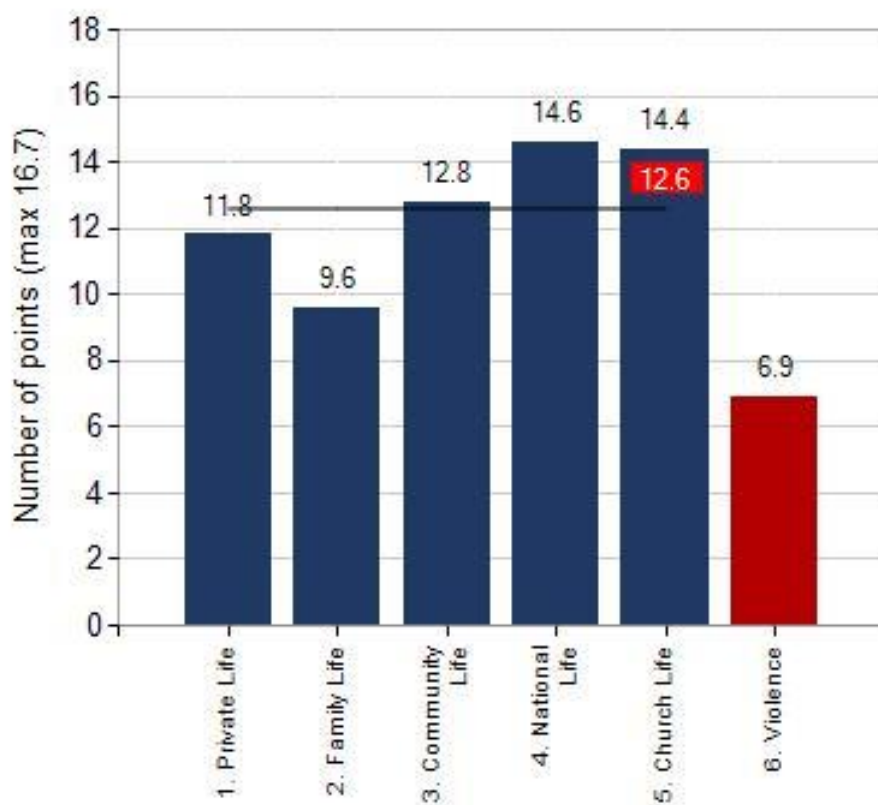
Appendix 7: Understanding the Persecution pattern

The detailed country scores of the 6 blocks of the WWL questionnaire converge into a specific Persecution pattern which consists of the following elements:

- The average score over blocks 1 to 5;
- The deviance from the average score of the scores for the different spheres of life;
- The level of violence experienced by Christians in the country.

The example below is taken from the WWL 2023 Full Country Dossier for Vietnam.⁸

WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for Vietnam



The WWL 2023 Persecution pattern for Vietnam shows:

- Average pressure on Christians in Vietnam has remained very high, rising to 12.6 points.
- Pressure is strongest in the *National* and *Church spheres* (extreme level of pressure), followed by the *Community* and *Private spheres* (very high pressure). The pressure on

⁸ WWL 2023 Full Country Dossier for Vietnam, available at: <https://www.opendoors.org/persecution/reports/Full-Country-Dossier-Vietnam-2023.pdf> and <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Vietnam-Full-Country-Dossier-January-2023.pdf>.

converts is especially acute in the *Private* and *Family spheres*, but all Christians face strong pressure in the *National* and *Church spheres*. This pressure is fueled by increasing levels of Communist rhetoric, continued expropriation of Catholic church land, the religion law which came into force in 2018 with its cumbersome requirements and strict implementation, and an ongoing suspicion towards all Christians (particularly converts) and towards all ethnic and religious minorities.

- The violence score went down again. From 8.7 points in WWL 2022, the score fell to 6.9 points in WWL 2023. Nevertheless, there was one killing reported and several churches were attacked. The government also continued its policy of detaining Christians, especially in connection with raids against "illegal religious activities". It was very difficult to get information from all parts of the country, especially the regions where ethnic minorities live.

World Watch Research recognizes the potential for using the Persecution pattern as part of the consistency check for questionnaires. The Persecution pattern can also serve to predict trends in ongoing persecution in countries on the WWL. Finally the Persecution pattern can serve as a tool giving early indications of upcoming persecution in countries not yet on the WWL. Taking this into account, WWL Full Country Dossiers include a section displaying a 5 year Persecution pattern. The example below (which consists of three charts) is once again taken from WWL 2023 Full Country Dossier for Vietnam.

Chart 1: Average pressure over the last five reporting periods

The first table below shows how the average level of pressure on Christians has been stable at a very high level over the last five reporting periods. It had plateaued at 12.3/12.4 points since WWL 2019, but increased to 12.6 in WWL 2023.

Vietnam: WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2023	12.6
2022	12.4
2021	12.4
2020	12.4
2019	12.3

Chart 2: Pressure in the 5 spheres of life over the last five reporting periods

The chart below shows that the pressure on Christians in all *spheres of life* has consistently been at a very high level or higher (except in *Family life*) over the last five reporting periods. The pressure in the *National sphere of life* has increased each year and is now at the extreme level of 14.6 points. The pressure in *Church life* has now plateaued at the extreme level of 14.4 points. This reflects the severity of the state restrictions, not least by the introduction of the new law on religion in 2018 and tighter Internet restrictions.

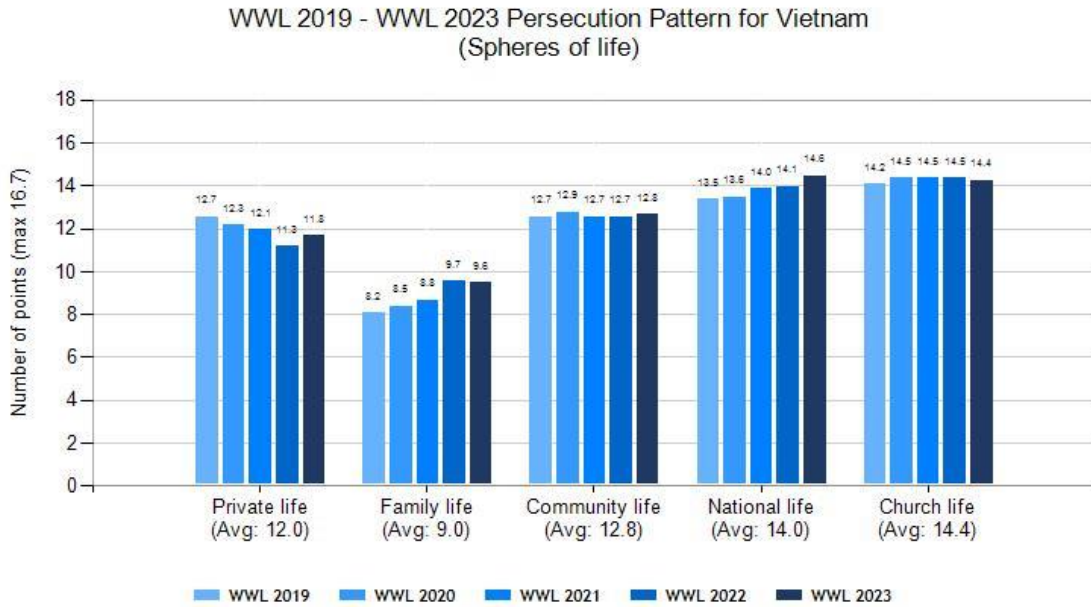


Chart 3: Violence against Christians over the last five reporting periods

Persecution in Vietnam has always involved violence. The chart below shows the very high scores over all 5 WWL reporting periods, with a peak in WWL 2021. Killings do not happen on a large scale; the Communist government's preferred means are prison sentences or deportation. Limitations in reporting suggest an undercounting, so the further decrease in score to 6.9 points in WWL 2023 does not automatically mean there have been less violent incidents occurring.

