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Research

Complete World Watch List Methodology

October 2025

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October 2025

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October 2025

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Note about Open Doors World Watch Research

The department World Watch Research was set up to carry out research into the persecution of Christians on a solid foundation that aims to withstand scholarly scrutiny and accepts academic guidance. WWR has been gathering and publishing detailed data on the persecution of Christians since 1992. One of their main tools for tracking and measuring the extent of persecution in the world is the World Watch List (WWL). WWL methodology has gradually evolved since the 1990s. In 2012, the methodology was comprehensively revised in order to provide greater credibility, transparency, objectivity and academic quality. In 2013 and 2016, further refinement of the methodology took place - see Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Brief overview of changes in WWL methodology since WWL 1993

WWL 1993 - WWL 1998	Original questionnaire; once per year, but updated every quarter in database.
WWL 1999 - WWL 2001	Adapted questionnaire, working with spreadsheets.
WWL 2002 - WWL 2012	WWL composed via questionnaire issued to field and some external experts.
WWL 2013	New methodology but with scoring grid of 3 Variable Answer Elements (VAEs). Questionnaire significantly revised with definition of different blocks that correspond with different spheres of life and violence.
WWL 2014 - WWL 2016	Basically same methodology but the scoring grid was changed to 4 VAEs. Only slight adaptations to the questionnaire.
WWL 2017 - WWL 2026	Same methodology but with reduction of number of questions and changes to the allocation of questions to the blocks 1-5 (spheres of life) in the questionnaire. Progressive scoring adjustments over the years regarding certain groups of countries and fine tuning of the interpretation of questions.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes in detail the methodology used for the production of the annual Open Doors World Watch List (WWL). It is regularly updated and published in order to:

- shed light on the philosophy behind the study of persecution;
- show the extensive levels of 'grass-roots' research carried out;
- give an insight into how the calculations for scoring the levels of persecution in a country are made.

A persecution situation presents a complex reality. 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. Sometimes, just living in a chaotic world creates substantial amounts of suffering for Christians and others alike. At other times, suffering may result from antipathy or hatred towards Christians (or it could be that in a given situation Christians experience difficulties both as ordinary citizens and for their faith - sometimes referred to as 'double vulnerability') and will be called persecution. WWR therefore defines persecution as 'any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians'. This is what the WWL methodology tries to identify and monitor.

Persecution is considered to occur where Christians and their communities experience pressure and/or violence that is specifically related to the persecution dynamics prevalent in their environment and which are forcing them to comply with the drivers of these dynamics. In the WWL methodology these persecution dynamics are grouped into three different 'impulses'. These impulses fuel nine different persecution engines and are driven by specific actors or drivers of persecution. The nine persecution engines currently used for WWL analysis are: Islamic oppression, Religious nationalism, Clan oppression, Ethno-religious hostility, Christian denominational protectionism, Communist and post-Communist oppression, Secular intolerance, Dictatorial paranoia and Organized corruption and crime.

World Watch Research distinguishes two main expressions of persecution:

- *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life); and
- *smash* (violence).

While it might seem that *smash* is the most prevalent and invasive expression of persecution, it is in fact often *squeeze* that is most prevalent and invasive. But whereas *smash* can be measured and tracked through recording incidents of violence, *squeeze* needs a different form of

documentation. It needs to be tracked by discerning how Christian life and witness is being put under pressure and squeezed in a whole range of different areas of life.

The WWL methodology has developed the 'five spheres concept' in order to track expressions of persecution (*squeeze* or pressure) in the following areas of life: Private life, Family life, Community life, National life and Church life. A sixth block highlights the *smash* (plain violence) experienced and potentially cuts through all five spheres of life. All six blocks have a set of questions that together form the body of the WWL questionnaire.

The WWL questionnaire is part of the system Open Doors uses for monitoring hostilities against Christians worldwide. The system begins with the Global Country Scan, which combines information gathered from the internet and other sources. Early warning signs flagged up by the Global Country Scan necessitate further research through the completion of 1 or 2 World Watch List (WWL) questionnaires, or selected parts of the questionnaire. If relevant, in-depth research is then done through the full WWL questionnaire.

A scoring system has been developed so that the persecution situation in different countries can be compared and the World Watch List can be compiled. The WWL questionnaire has 84 scored questions, divided into six blocks.[1] A scoring grid has been devised consisting of four categories of 'Yes' and 'No' for each question of blocks 1 to 5 (which measure the *squeeze)*. The grid has four Variable Answer Elements (VAEs) concerning: i) the number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution, ii) the proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution, iii) the intensity of persecution, and iv) the frequency of persecution. Block 6 - consisting of questions on violence - has a different scoring system. (A fifth VAE covers gender-specific questions which are currently not scored.)

The WWL questionnaire is a 'field-stream' questionnaire, filled out by country researchers gathering information through in-country networks. This gives the data-gathering process its 'grass-roots' character. The field-stream questionnaire, together with independent input from several external experts (which is used to fine-tune or cross-check field stream information), form the basis for the country scores. The persecution analysts of World Watch Research then put all the information together, giving feedback to the respondents and following-up their responses.

The detailed country scores of the six blocks of the WWL questionnaire converge into a specific country persecution pattern. This persecution pattern shows i) the average score over blocks 1 to 5 (different spheres of life); ii) the deviance of the individual scores in the different spheres of life from the average score; and iii) the level of violence experienced by Christians in the country. These elements are often characteristic for the persecution situation in a given country.

By means of the process of analysis described above, each country can be given a specific final score. The final score can be the result of different persecution engines. For instance, one country may score highly due to *Islamic oppression* while another country has a comparable

[1] A seventh block contains a further 16 questions which are used for gathering background information and are not scored. See Appendix 1.

score due to *Dictatorial paranoia*. The WWL methodology enables comparisons to be made between different persecution situations since its starting-point is the pressure and violence Christians experience in their different spheres of life. Whether this pressure or violence originates from the same or different persecution engines is not relevant for the final scores, although it is relevant for the country narrative.

The WWL ranks countries according to their final scores. The most important reason for ranking countries is to be able to present a complex reality to the broader public. For this to be done effectively, the WWL rankings and scores must always be used together with the corresponding country dossiers which explain the particularities of the persecution situation.

World Watch Research has developed a system of credibility rating. This is an internal rating. The Internal Confidence Rate (ICR) assesses the credibility of WWL results at country level by looking at the number of data points involved in gathering data for the field-stream questionnaire, finalizing the field-stream questionnaire, and providing cross-checks by external experts for each field-stream questionnaire.

WWL methodology has been developed to make it possible to compare the levels of persecution between countries despite their very different political and demographic realities. It is believed that both the methodology and system of research can stand up to scholarly scrutiny.

WORLD WATCH LIST METHODOLOGY

1. Monitoring persecution

One of the main tools used by Open Doors to track and measure the extent of pressure and violence targeting Christians in the world is the World Watch List (WWL). The WWL is based on the comparison of expert opinions (Open Doors researchers, external experts, persecution analysts of WWR). However, before discussing the more technical details of measuring, scoring and analyzing persecution-related data from a multitude of countries, this section elaborates upon several basic elements used in this approach. It deals with the definitions of the terms 'Christian' and 'persecution' (1.1), the complex reality of persecution (1.2), *squeeze* and *smash* (1.3), spheres of life and violence (1.4), and the five variables characterizing the persecution situation (1.5).[2]

1.1 Definitions of 'Christian' and 'persecution'

The WWL methodology has defined the terms 'Christian' and 'persecution (of Christians)' to clarify which people it monitors and what sort of situations or incidents involving those people

[2] As described in 1.5, a fifth variable has been introduced to cover gender-specific questions which are currently not scored but used for analysis purposes.

it takes into consideration. This way, the methodology can fulfill its goal, which is to monitor the persecution of Christians and their communities.

The WWL methodology uses the following definitions:

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

This definition includes not only the Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant denominations which define themselves according to theological creeds, but all people who self-identify as Christians, including those who do not belong to any specific denomination. The WWL methodology opts for this broad definition, following other institutions[3] that report on worldwide Christianity.

Persecution: ***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.***

To say that persecution has to be violent under-estimates the power of culture which has over time created a context in which Christians are squeezed out of normal life in society.

While this definition has its challenges because of its inclusiveness, such breadth is deemed necessary to cover the full range of hostility that is experienced by Christians in all areas of life, rather than limit the term 'persecution' to more overt forms of persecution or extreme forms of suffering. In practice, it is very difficult to state objectively what is, in fact, extreme. Often losing a job can be far worse in its effects than a beating in prison. Or being shunned by one's parents can be more psychologically scarring than being part of a skirmish on the street. Also, to say that persecution has to be violent deliberately underestimates the implicit and indirect power of culture which has over time created a situation that squeezes Christians out of normal life in society.

The WWL methodology recognizes that hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians can also occur between Christian groups. For this reason one of the persecution engines defined and analyzed by the team of World Watch Research (WWR) is Christian denominational protectionism.

[3] An example is the World Christian Database: The comprehensive statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups is updated regularly by staff at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (USA).

1.2 Complex reality: brokenness - impulses - persecution engines - drivers

A persecution situation presents a complex reality. It is not always clear if and to what extent pressure felt by Christians or even violence against them is directly related to their being Christian. Sometimes, just living in a chaotic world creates substantial amounts of suffering for Christians and others alike. At other times, suffering results from antipathy, hatred or simply the 'double vulnerability'[4] of Christians in a problematic context. This is all understood as persecution and is what the WWL methodology attempts to identify and monitor.

Section 1.2 explains the overall picture of persecution (1.2.1), 'brokenness' of the world (1.2.2), elementary impulses as sources of persecution (1.2.3), persecution engines (1.2.4), drivers of persecution (1.2.5), and the drive for exclusive power (1.2.6).

1.2.1 Overall picture of persecution

The WWL methodology sees Christians and their communities living in a world that is far from perfect. To a greater or lesser extent, they live in problematic circumstances, as all other inhabitants of the same areas do. Although these issues can cause Christians to feel pressured or violated, the WWL methodology does not consider this persecution per se, but rather refers to it as the 'brokenness' of the world. 'Brokenness' is the background against which persecution situations evolve.

Persecution is considered to occur when Christians and their communities experience specific pressure and/or violence in this situation of 'brokenness', forcing them to comply with the drivers of the persecution dynamics prevalent in their environment. The WWL methodology groups these dynamics into three different 'impulses'. These impulses fuel nine different persecution engines and are driven by specific actors or drivers of persecution. Diagram 2 (in section 1.2.2) shows the relation between impulses, persecution engines and a drive for exclusive power, against a background of 'brokenness'.

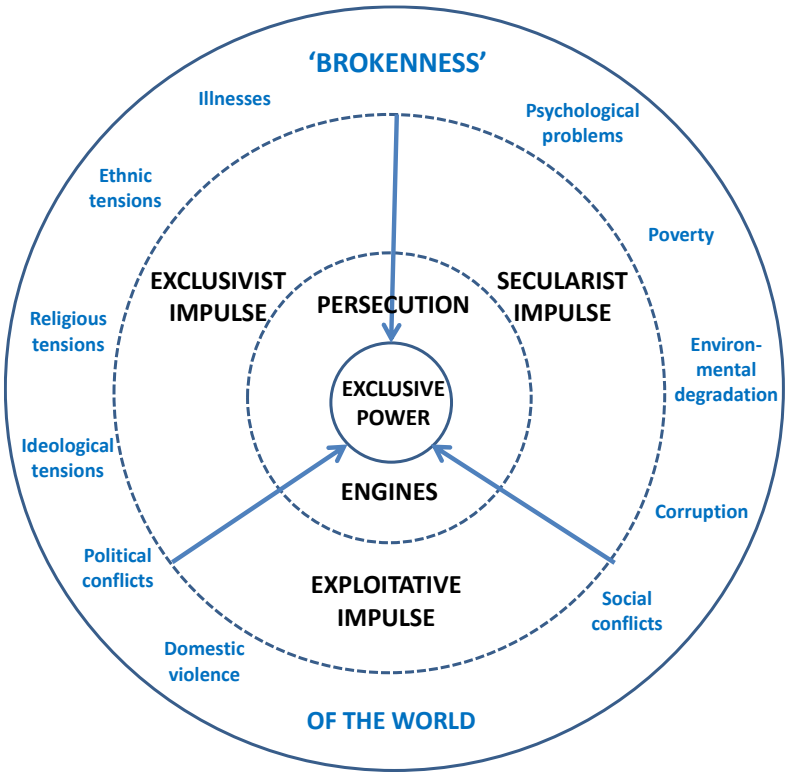
> Persecution is evident where Christians and their communities experience specific pressure and/or violence which forces them to comply with the drivers of the persecution dynamics prevalent in their environment.

1.2.2 'Brokenness' of the world

The WWL methodology takes into account the 'brokenness' of the world insofar as it operates as a background to the persecution of Christians. Persecution often takes place in disturbed, difficult and de-stabilized contexts such as war, ethnic tensions, religious tensions, ideological tensions, political conflicts, social conflicts, corruption, environmental degradation and natural disasters, poverty, (severe) psychological problems, illness and domestic violence. This backdrop influences the resilience of Christians negatively when they are targeted by the drivers of one or more persecution engines.

[4] Double vulnerability refers to situations in which all citizens face challenges, but in which people of a specific religious minority (e.g. Christians) find themselves particularly targeted.

Diagram 2: 'Brokenness' of the world as the background scenario against which different elementary human impulses strive for power by employing a variety of persecution engines



Developed by World Watch Research

This raises the question of the interaction between such background suffering ('brokenness' of the world) and suffering through active persecution engines. The question is if there is negative synergy between both. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is an example. Research into this question is still in its early stages.

1.2.3 Elementary impulses as sources of persecution

Persecution is related to religions, ideologies or corrupted mind-sets, i.e. impulses. The WWL methodology considers these impulses as the 'power sources' of different persecution engines. There are three elementary impulses, which are all fueling specific persecution engines: The exclusivist impulse, secularist impulse and exploitative impulse (see below: Diagram 3).

Diagram 3: The three elementary impulses and the specific persecution engines emanating from them

Elementary impulses	**Persecution engines**
Exclusivist impulse	Islamic oppression Religious nationalism Clan oppression Ethno-religious hostility Christian denominational protectionism

Secularist impulse	Communist and post-Communist oppression Secular intolerance
Exploitative impulse	Dictatorial paranoia Organized corruption and crime

- The exclusivist impulse

The exclusivist impulse has to do with very exclusive group formation. The 'other' who is not part of one's own group, is considered to be an inferior human being or 'infidel'. It is considered permissible to deal with such a person in ways that would never be allowed in one's own group without compromising one's own moral standards. The exclusivist impulse is always related to a strong religious presence.

The exclusivist impulse often develops a very strong emphasis on obtaining absolute, exclusive power to the detriment of 'others'. The 'others' are forced to either bend or crack. The persecution engines directly related to the exclusivist impulse are Islamic oppression, Religious nationalism, Clan oppression and Ethno-religious hostility. The 'others' can also be Christians and/or churches who are socially and politically excluded, sometimes even eliminated, by Christians and/or churches from another category of Christian communities. If this happens, the dominating church is driving the persecution engine termed Christian denominational protectionism.

The main drivers of these persecution engines are social groups putting pressure on governments. Once the engines are fully developed, both government and society are involved but the emphasis is normally on society because personal religious commitment is essential for these persecution engines to function.

- The secularist impulse

The secularist impulse relates to putting severe pressure on individuals or groups that do not adhere to the dominant ideology which is always anti-religious or skeptical of organized religion to some degree.

The ideologies inspiring the secularist impulse do not have to have the same emphasis; the main focus can vary from the 'revolutionary potential of the working class' to the launch of a very liberal sexual agenda. What counts is that human-beings or nature are the sole source of all norms and values, without divine inspiration or guidance.

Like the exclusivist impulse, the secularist impulse also often develops a very strong emphasis on obtaining absolute, exclusive power. This oppressive power can be very tangible or more subtle. Nevertheless, the aim is the same. The main persecution engines related to the secularist impulse are Communist and post-Communist oppression and Secular intolerance.

The main drivers of these persecution engines are governments (Communist and post-Communist oppression) or social groups putting pressure on governments (Secular intolerance). Once the engines are fully developed, both government and society are involved. Nevertheless, the emphasis is normally on the government because state control is essential for these persecution engines to function.

- The exploitative impulse

The exploitative impulse relates to plain greed - i.e. getting as many resources as possible for oneself and one's small, favored social environment, legally or illegally. Everything is allowed.

Power in the context of the exploitative impulse is more a means than a goal. While in the context of the exclusivist and secularist impulses power is actively sought to signify the supremacy of one's religion or ideology, the exploitative impulse needs power to safeguard its interests. The exploitative impulse relates to two persecution engines: Organized corruption and crime and Dictatorial paranoia.

The main drivers of Organized corruption and crime operate in the shadow of those driving other persecution engines and/or manipulate them to achieve their own goals. One of its main mechanisms is to illegally co-opt government officials and social agents into their agenda. While government and society as such are not driving this persecution engine, co-opted elements within their ranks are essential to it.

For Dictatorial paranoia the situation is different. The main drivers of this persecution engine are government officials at any level from local to national.

1.2.4 Persecution engines and their background power dynamics

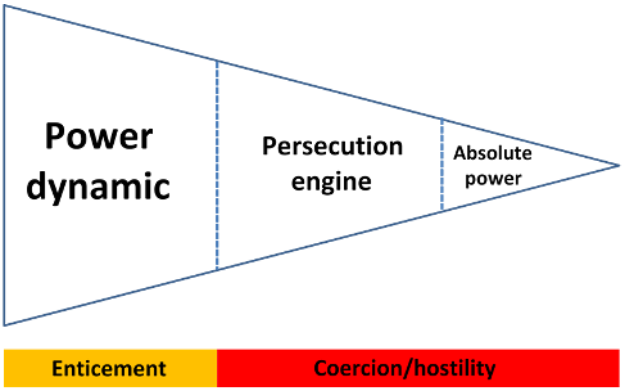
The term 'Persecution engine' is used to describe a distinct situation which is causing Christians to be persecuted either violently on non-violently.

World Watch Research uses the term 'Persecution engine' to describe a distinct situation which is causing Christians to be persecuted either violently on non-violently. This situation of persecution can be considered as the consequence of a societal 'power dynamic'. A power dynamic normally represents a world view that has a claim of superiority over other world views. 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 world view. The drivers of the power dynamic are often small (radical) groups within the broader group of adherents of that worldview, who are not necessarily representative of that broader group, but who somehow get sufficient space to maneuver towards their goal.

An example is Islam in northern Nigeria. It is not that all Muslims want to get rid of Christians in northern Nigeria through conversion or expulsion. Nevertheless, strong drivers of Islamization succeed through violent and non-violent means in making life for Christians in northern Nigeria more and more difficult.

Diagram 4 illustrates a power dynamic striving for absolute power in society by first using enticement and then coercion.

Diagram 4: Illustration of a societal power dynamic striving for absolute power



Developed by World Watch Research

Where Christian communities exist, the world view in question is first spread through enticing and encouraging Christians to join its ranks. This may be done in a low-key or high-profile way. For instance, in specific ethnic group areas of Sub-Saharan African countries, the Church is first weakened by Christians who find themselves attracted to the concepts of African Tribal Religion (ATR) and voluntarily join the ranks of ATR adherents. However, in due course even motivated church members might also find themselves being forced by militant groups to comply to ATR concepts. And if ATR adherents convert to Christianity that will cause them even more serious problems.

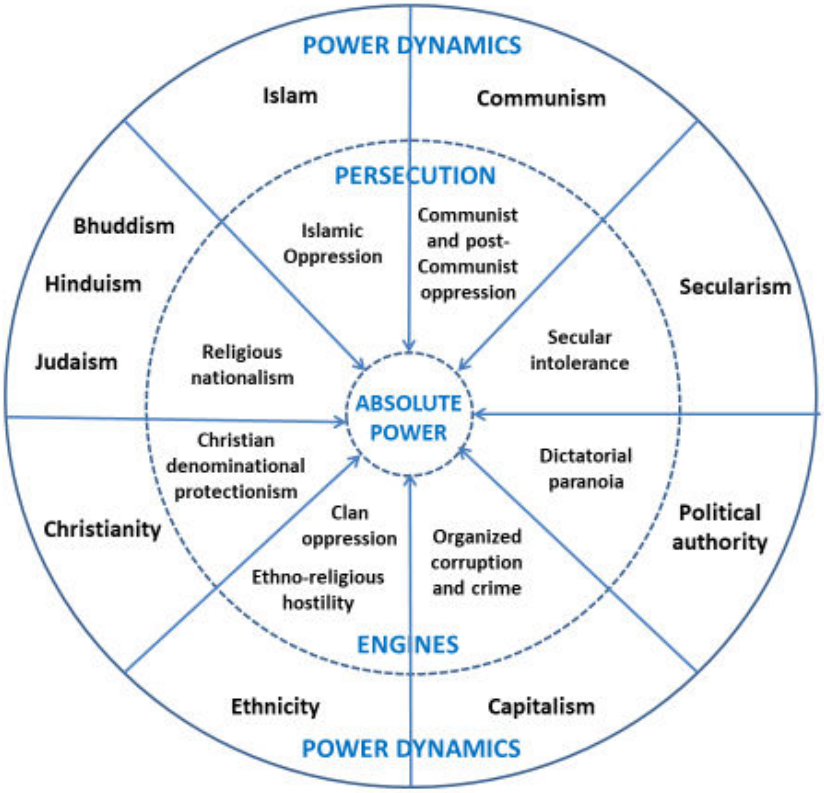
Where such enticement fails to bring the desired result of obtaining absolute power over the Church (and others not yet subject to the groups exerting pressure), the power dynamic is likely to develop into a distinct persecution engine, creating a situation of coercion and hostility – as illustrated in Diagram 4. The drivers of that power dynamic then become drivers of persecution.

Other examples of power dynamics are Secularism, Islam and Communism.

WWR has identified a total of 9 persecution engines with corresponding power dynamics. These persecution engines each describe situations which 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.

Descriptions of each persecution engine are outlined in 1.2.4.1 below. The WWR analyst categorizes each engine by assessing what level of influence each engine has on society in the country being analyzed - see 1.2.4.2 below.

Diagram 5: The nine Persecution engines and their corresponding societal power dynamics



Developed by World Watch Research

1.2.4.1 Descriptions of the persecution engines

i) 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 like-minded groups roll out a holistic Islamic mission strategy, coupled with a ban on conversion away from Islam at the family and local community level. An example of the use of militant force can be seen in groups such as Islamic State, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab.

The scope of this Persecution engine is global.

ii) 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 Christians who witness in public where a background of ever increasing legislation exists that curtails religious freedom (e.g. anti-conversion laws).

The scope of this Persecution engine is mostly national.

iii) 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 often is a combination of a gradual building-up of pressure and incidental outright violence.

Examples:

- An example of subtle pressure occurs 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 occurs when Christian families are driven out a village because they do not want to participate in non-Christian traditional ceremonies.

The scope of this Persecution engine 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.

iv) 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 within the clan caused by conversion.) This engine expresses itself mostly (although not exclusively) through a multitude of violent confrontations. This can go as far as pushing for religious cleansing 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 militants in many parts of 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 Persecution engine 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.

v) 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 often towards non-violence.

Examples:

- 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 Persecution engine is national, especially when the Christian denomination involved has narrow ties with the State.

vi) 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. This system may still be in use in countries after the fall of Communism, as is the case in Central Asia. Although the engine relies on a combination of pressure and violence, the violence is often not particularly visible because the system's hold on the church is complete and tight.

Examples:

- 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.
- North Korea: A high prevalence of violence targeting Christians occurs via the prison camp system.

The scope of this Persecution engine is national, although in the past it was global.

vii) Secular intolerance:

This engine describes the situation where Christians are forced to silence or alter their beliefs in the public domain. Its drivers seek to transform societies into the shape of a new, radically secularist ethic. This new ethic is often advanced in a manner that infringes upon or even removes the rights of pastors or parents to teach a biblical understanding on matters such as belief in God, the sanctity of human life, God's design for marriage, etc. When Christian individuals, families or institutions try to remain faithful to such beliefs, they are opposed by (i) non-discrimination legislation, (ii) attacks on parental rights in the area of education, foster care, and adoption, (iii) censorship of the Cross or other religious symbols from the public square, (iv) the use of hate-speech laws to limit the freedom of expression, and (v) Church registration laws. Most of this is nonviolent, although arrests of pastors and other Christians have taken place.

- An example of this engine is compulsory participation in education lessons and incorporating content that is counter to biblical teachings, and the serious threats

targeting parents who wish to exercise their right to raise their children in accordance with their religious beliefs and morals.

The scope of this Persecution engine is global."

viii) 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 is 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 Persecution engine is national.

ix) 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 fear of violent repercussions in case of non-compliance, and by such violence.

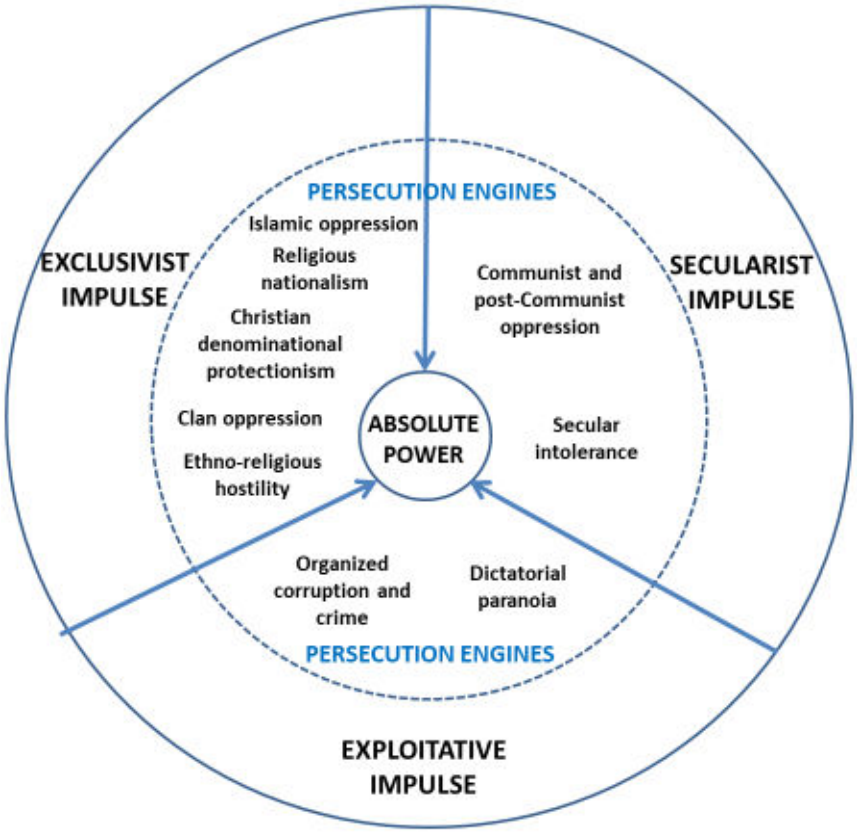
Examples:

- 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 very radical strand of Islam) in moderate Muslim countries.
- Organized crime: In Latin American countries such as Colombia and Mexico criminal groups (drugs, 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 Persecution engine is global.

Diagram 6 further develops Diagram 2. It specifies the persecution engines that are instrumental for the different elementary human impulses to obtain absolute power, to the detriment of Christians.

Diagram 6: The persecution engines act as vehicles for the different elementary human impulses to achieve absolute power



Developed by World Watch Research

1.2.4.2 Assessing the level of influence of each persecution engine

The categorization of the persecution engines is necessary since in many countries more than one persecution engine is in operation. The analyst needs to identify which engines are most dominant in a given country. This is done by the analyst estimating a WWL final country score for each engine evident in the country to identify whether it has Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very Strong influence on society. For this estimation the analyst uses all the input obtained from In-country networks, Open Doors researchers and External experts.

Generally, one specific persecution engine will be identified as being more prevalent than others. Often this persecution engine creates a vacuum for other engines to flourish as well. A clear example is the advance of Organized corruption and crime driven by criminal groups in contexts where violent radical Islamic activity is prevalent. In such a case, there normally exists a high degree of impunity regarding violence against Christians: Islamist rulers will tolerate criminal groups trafficking Christian girls and women, as long as they get their share.

Diagram 7: Table showing method used to categorize persecution engines in a given country

	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....					

1.2.5 Drivers of persecution

The drivers of persecution engines are people and/or groups embodying the three main impulses. WWL methodology enables the research team to study who the drivers are and which ones are involved in hostilities against Christians in a particular country. The WWL methodology distinguishes 12 categories of drivers of persecution. One of these is specifically related to the political sphere (i.e. government) and the other eleven are related to society in general as listed below in 1.2.5.1. Additionally, the research team then assesses the level of influence the drivers of each persecution engine exert in the country being analyzed - see 1.2.5.2 below.

1.2.5.1 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

WWL methodology enables the analysts to study who the drivers are in a particular country - and which ones are involved in hostilities against Christians.

7. ***Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs***
   E.g. students, neighbors, shopkeepers
8. ***Extended family***
   E.g. 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
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.

Often more than one driver is active in and around one or more persecution engines.

Even though the drivers of persecution cannot always be clearly distinguished, WWR considers the above categories clear enough for making good analysis possible. Especially the fact that the broad category 'society' is divided up into 11 distinctive sub-categories, is considered by WWR to be of particular value to the methodology.

1.2.5.2 Categorization of the drivers of each persecution engine

The WWR analyst assesses the level of influence the drivers of each persecution engine exert in order to see which are the most dominant. Each of the drivers operating in the country are categorized according to the scale: Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong.

Diagram 8: Table showing the categorization of the drivers per persecution engine

First persecution engine:					
	VERY WEAK	**WEAK**	**MEDIUM**	**STRONG**	**VERY STRONG**
Country / persecution engine 1 Estimated score for the (single) persecution engine is [put here result of foregoing tab for that specific persecution engine]	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).
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					

For this estimation the analyst uses all input received from in-country networks, country researchers and external experts. The process is repeated for each persecution engine.

1.2.6 Driving to achieve exclusive power

The impulses and the related persecution engines all aim towards the accumulation of absolute, exclusive power in society and in politics. By doing so, they crush everything in their way (including Christians and their communities) which does not align itself with those powerful societal dynamics.

Even when drivers of persecution do not have an explicit anti-Christian agenda but are simply pushing for exclusive power, hostilities against Christians can be classified as persecution.

In WWL methodology, it is clear that neither the nine persecution engines nor their interplay are necessarily explicitly directed against Christians and/or churches. One possible scenario is that the drivers of these engines completely focus on their quest for power and what they can achieve with it. The best way for people to survive who do not readily 'buy into' this quest is to be pliable enough so as not to draw (negative) attention to themselves. However, Christianity in its very essence teaches that exclusive power does not ultimately belong to earthly forces. Such teaching often draws the ire of the drivers of persecution, whether that teaching is expressed on the streets, in pulpits or maybe only behind closed doors. Therefore, even when drivers of persecution do not have an explicit anti-Christian agenda but are simply pushing for exclusive power, hostilities against Christians can be classified as persecution. Similarly, radical religious, ideological and corruption-related expressions of the quest for (exclusive) power that cause harm to Christians and churches can be referred to (and analyzed) as Persecution engines even when they do not base themselves on an anti-Christian manifesto.

Despite the above, WWR recognizes that in many cases of hostilities against Christians an anti-Christian agenda or manifesto does exist. This agenda is deliberately amplified by the propaganda machines used by the drivers of persecution.

1.3 'Squeeze' and 'smash'

World Watch Research distinguishes two main expressions of persecution: *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *smash* (violence). Nevertheless, while it might seem superficially that *smash* is the most prevalent and invasive expression of persecution, it is often in fact the *squeeze* that is most prevalent and invasive. WWL methodology, therefore, negates the idea that 'the more violence there is against Christians, the more persecution there must be' and is able to indicate that low levels of violence can go together with (very) high levels of persecution.

An example of a very high level of *squeeze* is the situation of Christians on the Maldives. From every side, they face pressure from friends, neighbors, family and the government. Due to such an enormous amount of pressure and control, Christians are virtually unable to express their faith in any way. Christians feel that they and their faith are being squeezed out of existence by

their persecutors. However, if someone were looking for a list of incidents where Christians were beaten, put in jail or deported, there would be very few.

In other words, the degree of persecution can be so intense and so all-pervasive that it actually results in fewer incidents of persecution, since Christians hide their faith and acts of public witness and defiance are rare. So while there is no evidence of 'smashing' the church through violence and arrests, the *squeeze* is what is killing the church. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that many persecutors prefer to *squeeze* the church, rather than *smash* it, in the belief that it is a more successful form of persecution.

WWL methodology also seeks to negate another assumption which claims that 'the most violent persecutors of the church are its main persecutors'. An example is the situation of Christians in northern Nigeria. One of their most violent persecutors in recent years has been the Islamic militant group, Boko Haram that has bombed churches and killed numerous pastors and other Christians. It is an unsubtle attempt to *smash* the church. But in fact, for most Christians the greatest threat comes from a creeping cultural Islamization. This has been stealthily progressing since the 1980's causing Christians to gradually realize over time that they have become second-class citizens in a once more hospitable but now hostile culture.

The analysis of pressure is based on the opinion of experts and not in quantifying specific occurences. In contrast, the analysis of the levels of violence is based on specific incidents occurring within the WWL reporting period.

While *smash* can be measured and tracked through incidents of violence, *squeeze* needs to be documented differently. It needs to be tracked by discerning how Christian life and witness itself is being squeezed in all the different areas of life.

1.4 Spheres of life and violence

WWL methodology uses a 'five spheres concept' to track expressions of persecution in different areas of life. The level of pressure experienced in each sphere of life is calculated and a sixth block shows the level of violence. This sixth block potentially cuts across all five spheres of life.

Before looking at each individual sphere of life and its corresponding set of survey questions, it is important to address a possible misunderstanding. WWL analysis of the levels of pressure experienced by Christians is based on the answers given by experts to a set of questions investigating each sphere of life.[5] This analysis of pressure is therefore based on the opinion of experts and not in quantifying specific events or occurrences. In contrast, the analysis of the levels of violence is based on specific incidents occurring in the reporting period.

[5] Instead of carrying out a 'sample survey' among the different segments of the Church in a given country, the questionnaire is completed by focus groups or individual respondents who are chosen according to their expertise. See section 3.2.

Private life

Private life is defined as the inner life of a Christian, the *forum internum*, the freedom of thought and conscience.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: "How free has a Christian been to relate to God one-on-one in his/her own private space?" This is not limited to the private home but can also apply to prison, for example, or a prayerful walk in the woods. This is irrespective of who the agent challenging this freedom might be.

The questions 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 faith with others, freedom of private assembly and isolation of Christians.

Diagram 9: Table showing Block 1 questionnaire questions

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 *immediate* family members?
1.8	Has it been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those *other than immediate* 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)?

Family life

Family life is defined as pertaining to the nuclear and extended family of a Christian.

The guiding WWL question asked here 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?" It also asks: "How much have Christians been discriminated against, harassed or in any other way persecuted by their own families?"

The questions 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, pressure to divorce, custody of children and inheritance rights.

Diagram 10: Table showing Block 2 questionnaire questions

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?

Community life

Community life is defined as the interaction of Christians with their respective local communities beyond the family level and below any supra-local level. This community life includes the workplace, business, health care, education, local public life and civic order. A mobile person

can have several local communities covering different aspects of community life, e.g. origin or residence in one place and education or work in another.

The guiding WWL question asked here 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?"

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with threats to (or obstruction of) 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, and policing issues (fines, interrogations, forced reporting).

Diagram 11: Table showing Block 3 questionnaire questions

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. *jizya* tax, community tax, protection money)?
3.13	Have Christians been interrogated or compelled to report to the local vigilante/police for faith-related reasons?

National life

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.

The guiding WWL question asked here 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?"

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the Constitution or basic law, 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, media reporting, smear campaigns, religious symbols, blasphemy accusations, impunity, equal treatment in court, monitoring of trials.

Diagram 12: Table showing Block 4 questionnaire questions

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?

Church life

Church life is defined as the collective exercise by Christians of freedom of thought and conscience, particularly as regards uniting with fellow Christians in worship, service and public expression of their faith without undue interference. It also pertains to property held or used by Christians for these purposes. This sphere of life differs from the previous four in that it does not look at the persecution of individual Christians but at the persecution of whole church communities; it cannot be depicted as a further wider circle around the others, but as one that intersects with them.

The Church sphere of life is different to the other spheres in that it does not look at the persecution of individual Christians but at the persecution of whole church communities.

The guiding WWL question asked here 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?”

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the monitoring or hindrance in gathering of Christians, registration of churches, church building and renovation, expropriation and non-return, prevention of activities 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 persecution by government or social actors.

Diagram 13: Table showing Block 5 questionnaire questions

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 *inside* their place of worship?
5.5	Have churches been hindered from organizing Christian activities *outside* 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?

Violence

Violence is defined as the deprivation of physical freedom or as serious bodily or mental harm to Christians or serious damage to their property.

Violence cuts across all spheres of life.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: "How many cases of such violence have there been?"

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the killing of Christians, attacks on communal Christian buildings, detention without trial, jailing, abduction, rape and sexual harassment, forced marriage, other physical or mental harm, attacks on the homes and businesses of Christians, and eviction and flight.

Diagram 14: Table showing Block 6 questionnaire questions

Block 6: Violence	
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?

The answers for the twelve Block 6 questions are based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the total numbers presented each WWL reporting period must be understood as being minimum figures. The following points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:

1. **Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced.** Possible reasons for this may be:

    - Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.
    - In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.
    - If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.
    - In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.

2. **Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:**

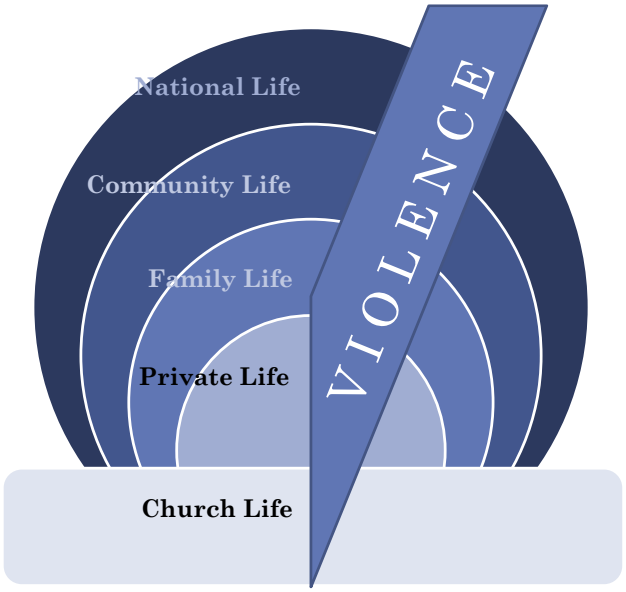
    - Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).
    - In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.
    - Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately. Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other oppressive factors that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. These numbers could be immense.

3. **The use of symbolic numbers:** In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10*, 100* etc.) is given as an answer and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is

uncertain. A symbolic number of 100* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000*, 100,000* and 1,000,000*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

4. **The symbol "x" in the table:** This denotes a known number which cannot be published due to security concerns.

Diagram 15: Four spheres of life relating to Christians as individuals and the church sphere of life looking at church communities - with violence as a cross-cutting phenomenon



Developed by Christof Sauer, IIRF

Diagram 15 (above) shows the relationship between violence and the pressure experienced in the five spheres of life. The four spheres of life relating to Christians as individuals are seen as ever widening circles. Persecution can be experienced by Christians both in their intimate social environment and/or in the public domain, which is less intimate. It depends on the type of persecution involved and how the persecution engine has developed. The church sphere of life is different to the other spheres in that it does not look at the persecution of individual Christians but at the persecution of whole church communities. Violence cuts across all spheres of life.

In addition to the six blocks mentioned in detail above, WWL methodology also encourages the provision of background information in a seventh block. In this special block of the WWL questionnaire, respondents are given the opportunity (currently in the form of 16 questions) to describe general trends relating to the persecution engines, their drivers, church development, gender-specific information and expectations for the future. The contents of this block contribute to the interpretative narrative (for instance in the various sections making up each WWL Country dossier) which gives background information to the basic WWL country score.

1.5 Variables characterizing the persecution situation

In the WWL methodology, five variables have been defined which are important for understanding the spread and degree of persecution in the country: The four main Variable Answer Elements (VAEs) are: The number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution (1.5.1); the proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1.5.2); the intensity of persecution (1.5.3); and the frequency of persecution (1.5.4). A fifth variable covers the gender-specific nature of the persecution but is not included in the actual scoring (1.5.5), but feeds a separate section of the Country Dossier and special analyses on gender specific persecution phenomena.

This section describes the content of the five variables. Section 3.1 describes the numerical values attributed to the four main VAEs.

1.5.1 The number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution

WWL methodology distinguishes different categories of Christian communities. In a given country, these categories may all be present or only some of them. Also, the persecution experienced may target all the categories of Christian communities in a country or only some of them. To be able to tackle this issue, WWL methodology uses the number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution as a variable in the scoring of the WWL questionnaire.

The questionnaire distinguishes four categories of Christian communities:

- *Communities of expatriate Christians*

This category applies to a situation in which foreign Christian residents (expatriates or migrant workers) are allowed (to a certain degree) to rent or own church buildings or at least conduct church services, but where they are not allowed to have contact with nationals regarding matters of Christian faith. Moreover, nationals are not allowed to take part in their services. This means that the expatriate or migrant church community is often a radically isolated body in the country.

Saudi Arabia is a typical example. In countries like Saudi Arabia, expatriates or migrant workers can often be divided in two major sub-categories: i) Highly educated, skilled laborers working in oil-related industries; and ii) Poorly educated, non-skilled workers, such as domestic cleaners. In such contexts, expatriate or migrant Christian communities - although tolerated - face serious restrictions.

- *Historical Christian communities*

This category comprises the typical historical churches, such as Roman Catholic, Orthodox and traditional Protestant, which have often been part of a country's history for hundreds of years. In many cases, they have held official church registration for years. Their situation and degree of freedom differ from country to country. In some countries their presence is nearly eradicated, in others they have a great degree of freedom to operate, while in several other countries they have been functioning in a state of second-class citizenship (*dhimmitude*). In persecution contexts they are often less persecuted than converts and non-traditional churches (the third and fourth categories of Christian communities described below).

A parallel phenomenon in this category is formed by so-called government-controlled churches, such as the Three Self Church in China. They have official registration but because they are controlled by government authorities their status is different to that of the historical churches mentioned in this category.

Converts are normally the first victims of persecution.

- *Converts*

This category considers people who once belonged to a dominating religion or ideology, traditional religion, organized crime or any other strong identifier and who changed identity in order to become Christian.[6]

Converts are normally the first victims of persecution. For instance, converts to Christianity from a Muslim background: Even when society is not yet Islamized and the reigning government has not yet adopted Sharia law, converts are very vulnerable in their private, family and community spheres of life. The same applies for defectors from criminal gangs, although in their case it is probably the community sphere of life which is more problematic than their private and family spheres of life.

Converts may be absorbed by one of the other categories of Christianity but often gather in 'house-churches' or 'underground churches'. When the latter is the case, it shows converts are afraid to be openly recognized as Christians and therefore are forced to go underground.

- *Non-traditional Christian communities*
  (such as Evangelicals, Baptists, Pentecostals and/or other Christian communities not included in the above three groups)

The category deals mainly with the great variety of younger Protestant expressions, including the independent churches in many countries. Some other Christian entities might dispute that they are actually Christians because of a serious lack of theological orthodoxy, but as long as they self-identify as Christians (see definition of 'Christian' above) they are included in this category.

In general, the Christian communities included in this category are often active in evangelism. This makes them prone to serious hostilities in countries where the context for Christianity is suppressive. Because of this, these Christians are sometimes also forced to gather in 'house-churches' or 'underground churches'.
As stated above, WWL methodology uses the proportion of the categories of Christianity persecuted as a variable for scoring the WWL questionnaire, and not the proportion of all Christians. The reason for this is that a vulnerable and very small Christian community can easily be subjected to very intense persecution. Or stated the other way around: A Christian community such as an 'underground' group of Christians with a Muslim background could also be very small due to the fact that they suffer very intense persecution. Using this variable makes

[6] "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".

it possible, for instance, to describe situations in countries where there is both a convert population that is heavily restricted and a broader Christian population of different types which enjoys relative freedom.

1.5.2 Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution

WWL methodology covers the persecution of Christians in nation-states, but within the borders of a state Christians may experience sharply contrasting levels of persecution in different parts of the territory. The methodology needs to take this into account.

The variable chosen from WWL 2018 onwards is the "proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution" instead of the "proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution" which was used until WWL 2017. The former is a demographic criterion, the latter a geographic criterion. It was found that the geographic criterion did not account for huge disparities in population density, and could cause an artificial increase in the score if persecution mainly took place in areas with very low population densities. The demographic criterion does not have that disadvantage.

The decision taken in the WWL methodology is to score only nation-states, as it would be arbitrary to include only some parts of countries or federal states. However, to account for regional differences within a country, the WWL approach to scoring the questionnaire makes it possible to indicate which part of the population is living in those parts of the country that are affected by persecution of Christians. For instance: If 3 out of 10 states (or provinces) of a country are affected by persecution, the person answering the questions is asked to check the number of people living in these 3 states (or provinces), and calculate its percentage of the total population in the country. It is important to note that this is not about the number of Christians living in these 3 states (or provinces) but the number of all people living there.

Countries are not always homogeneously affected by persecution. Persecution can be much worse in some parts of a country than others. By scoring the proportion of the general population living in the territory affected by persecution it is therefore possible to state whether Christians are affected everywhere in a given country or whether there are certain areas where they are more affected. The use of this variable helps to clarify whether a particular situation affects only parts of the country, as is the case in Kenya or Uganda, for example. It makes it possible to take the specific situation in those affected regions into account, without giving it too much weight or downplaying it.

The WWL methodology for scoring nation-states does provoke two problems. First, countries are very different in size. The WWL compares the score of very big countries like China, India or Indonesia with much smaller countries like the Maldives and Comoros. In practice, this could mean that serious hostilities/pressure against Christians in parts of India are somehow averaged out over the whole territory of India and hence get less weight per unit area than comparable hostilities in a much smaller country like the Maldives.

Secondly, countries within federations will not be included on the WWL as separate countries but included in the federal state. For instance, Chechnya (part of the Russian Federation) might

on its own score high enough to make it onto the WWL but does not in the light of this aspect of the methodology. WWL methodology cannot solve these problems. However, the country dossiers, which accompany the published WWL each year, provide space for explanation and differentiation. Additionally, such countries within federations could be highlighted in other reports or specific lists about 'regional hotspots', or in supplementary studies of the 'mega-countries' every few years.

1.5.3 Intensity of persecution

The *intensity* of persecution is another variable characteristic of the persecution situation in a country. For every question investigated in the WWL questionnaire the intensity can vary between *low* and *very high*.

Christians may experience sharply contrasting levels of persecution in different parts of a country. WWL methodology takes this into account.

Intensity is a measure of concentration or vehemence; it is the degree or extent to which something is intense. In the WWL methodology it is related to the way the drivers of persecution implement persecution and to the consequences of this implementation (i.e. the level of pressure imposed or the magnitude of persecution). Or to put it simply, intensity is the degree of persecution (or level of pressure) caused by a driver of persecution. This is not about how people feel: *Intensity* is not measured by a persecuted Christian's subjective perception, but is rather an objective assessment from the viewpoint of the person filling out the questionnaire. It is important to look at this *intensity* factor for each question separately.

For example, there is a case in which the burial of Christians is hindered. The intensity of this hindrance can be 'low', meaning that it takes some negotiation to get access to the village cemetery. It can also be 'very high' meaning that Christians are obliged to transport their deceased even outside the region, and bury them there.

Intensity is about the strength of persecution (pressure) being measured. There is a danger of confusion at this point: The scores given are not to be confused with the measurement of frequency.

1.5.4 Frequency of persecution

The *frequency* of persecution is the fourth variable that characterizes persecution in a country. For every question investigated in the WWL questionnaire, the frequency can vary between *sporadic* and *permanent*.

Frequency is to be understood as the rate at which incidents of persecution happen and is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as: "The rate at which something occurs over a particular period of time or in a given sample." In WWL methodology, it is about looking at how often persecution occurs in a given country. In effect, the point of interest is in finding out to what extent a particular form of persecution is a rare or common occurrence. In other words, it is about trying to gauge the *frequency* of the occurrence in the territory over a defined period of time.

For example, in the case of hindrance of the burial of Christians, it may only occur now and then in a few villages. But in most other villages of the region, there is perhaps no problem at all. The *frequency* level is therefore 'sporadic'. However, this phenomenon could also be occurring very often in many villages. It is then to be assessed as 'frequent' or even 'permanent'. If country 'X' prohibits wearing Christian symbols or importing Christian materials from abroad only during the month of Ramadan, the *frequency* can be categorized as 'sporadic' because it happens only during one month out of twelve.

1.5.5 The gender-specific nature of persecution

A fifth factor giving gender-specific information is also considered for every question investigated in the WWL questionnaire (since WWL 2018). For each question the researcher is required to indicate if the situation involves: Only men / mostly men / both equally / mostly women / only women / unknown. This information is not currently scored in WWL analysis.

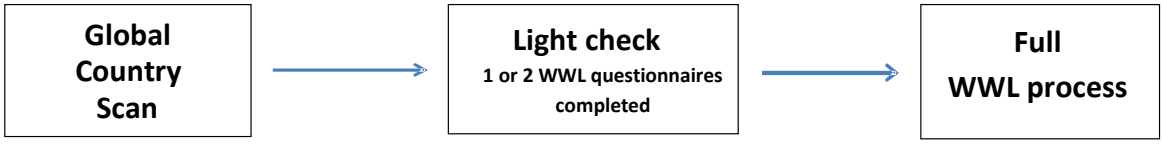
2. Tools for monitoring persecution

2.1 Monitoring hostilities against Christians worldwide

The world has many countries and it would be very laborious to investigate all countries using the extensive WWL questionnaire. In order to know which countries to include in in-depth investigations, the WWL methodology has developed a three step approach for monitoring hostilities against Christians in all countries of the world. (This method could also be adapted for use for monitoring hostilities against other religious minorities.)

As can be seen in Diagram 16, the first component of the system is the Global Country Scan which combines information gathered from the internet and other sources (2.2). Early warning signs flagged up by the Global Country Scan necessitate further research in the form of a 'Light check' through the completion of 1 or 2 WWL questionnaires by external experts. If the need for further in-depth research becomes clearly evident, the full WWL process is set in motion (2.3).

Diagram 16: Three step system for integral monitoring of hostilities against Christians worldwide



Developed by World Watch Research

2.2 The Global Country Scan

The Global Country Scan, developed by WWR, is a simple instrument to get a quick idea of the situation in almost all countries of the world and provides justification for the non-inclusion of countries for full WWL analysis. The Global Country Scan combines information from sources like Freedom House, Pew Forum, (international think-tanks and academic research institutes) and the US State Department with the results of Internet and other searches on manifestations of Persecution engines carried out by WWR (see Diagram 17).

Diagram 17: The format of the Global Country Scan

DIFFERENT INDEXES									
1. Freedom House	2. Government Restrictions Index	3. Social Hostilities Index	4. Country of Particular Concern	5. Press Freedom Index	6. Corruption Perceptions Index	7. Fragile States Index	8. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)	9. ACLED	10. Destabilization factors
POWER DYNAMICS / PERSECUTION ENGINES									
Islam / Islamic oppression	Bhuddism Hinduism Judaism / Religious nationalism	Christianity / Christian denominational protectionism	Ethnicity / Clan oppression	Ethnicity / Ethno-religious hostility	Communism / Communist and post-Communist oppression	Secular humanism / Secular intolerance	Political authority / Dictatorial paranoia	Capitalism / Organized corruption and crime	

Developed by World Watch Research

In very evident cases, the WWL questionnaire can also directly follow the Global Country Scan exercise, or be applied directly without it. Mali (WWL 2013) and Central African Republic (WWL 2014) are examples where this was implemented, as there was a sudden and serious persecution situation involving the Persecution engine *Islamic oppression*.

2.3 World Watch List Questionnaire

The current WWL questionnaire consists of 84 questions, divided into 6 blocks with options for scoring and comments for each question.[7] A seventh block contains a further 16 questions that are not scored but serve to make additional information available (see Diagram 18).

The WWL questionnaire is filled out online with the possibility to work offline. The questionnaire is available in various languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Bahasa Indonesia, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Swedish. Further translations are created on the basis of need.

Diagram 18: Structure of the WWL questionnaire

Block	Number of questions
Block 1: Private Life *(10 questions)*	10
Block 2: Family Life *(13 questions)*	13
Block 3: Community Life *(13 questions)*	13
Block 4: National Life *(16 questions)*	16
Block 5: Church Life *(20 questions)*	20
Block 6: Violence *(12 questions)* covers many forms of violence	12
TOTAL no. of scored questions	**84**
Block 7: Additional questions - not scored but included for providing background information	16

Blocks 1 to 5 represent the different spheres of life - from private through family, community and national life to church life. These blocks cover pressure on Christians (*squeeze*) in the different spheres of life. Block 6 accounts for forms of violence (*smash*).

[7] A Word version of the WWL 2026 questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

Although each of the blocks 1 to 6 has a different number of questions, all blocks count the same (i.e. the maximum score for each block is 16.667) - See Section 3.1.5. Analysis of the answers is carried out per block. It is also possible to combine questions from different blocks for analysis.

Block 7 presents additional questions that are not scored but allow respondents to provide background information on general trends relating to the country, the Church in the country, the gender profile of persecution and expectations for the future.

WWL questionnaires consist of 100 questions:

- 84 are scored (divided over 6 blocks)
- 16 are unscored (in a 7th block).

3. Obtaining results from the WWL questionnaires

As mentioned above, the WWL questions to be scored in the questionnaire are divided into 6 blocks. The allocation of points per question in block 6 does not follow the system used for blocks 1-5 and will be dealt with later in 3.1.5. For scoring each question in blocks 1-5 there are 4 variable answer elements (VAEs) per question. Each VAE has a scale of 1-4 points, resulting in a 4x4 scoring grid. Section 3 discusses the use of this scoring grid (3.1) and the three sources of expertise in relation to the completion of the field-stream questionnaire[8] (3.2).

3.1 The scoring grid

In this section, first the general make-up of the scoring grid is presented (3.1.1), followed by a look at the four variable answer elements (VAEs) (3.1.2). The basic method of calculation is then presented (3.1.3) and the options 'Unknown' and 'N/A' discussed (3.1.4). Finally the distribution of the scores over the spheres of life and the incidence of violence is explained (3.1.5).

3.1.1 General make-up of the scoring grid

The scoring grid has been developed with a column for 'No' and four columns for the different categories of 'Yes' (Diagram 19) in order to take into account the diverse character of persecution evident in countries. The answer to each question in blocks 1 to 5 is calculated from the average of the four elements discussed in Section 1.5 and represented in Diagram 19 below as well as in the subsequent paragraph.

Diagram 19: Scoring grid for the WWL questionnaire

[8] The field-stream questionnaire is the WWL questionnaire which has been filled out by researchers at country level, gathering information through in-country networks.

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
(1) Number of categories of Christianity affected by persecution	None	(see Diagram 20 below)	(see Diagram 20 below)	(see Diagram 20 below)	(see Diagram 20 below)
(2) Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution	None	Above 0% - 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
(3) Intensity of persecution	None	Low	Medium	High	Very high
(4) Frequency of persecution	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent	Permanent

3.1.2 The four variable-answer elements of the scoring grid

As shown in Diagram 19 above, the scoring grid has four variable-answer elements that determine the score for each question of blocks 1 to 5:

1) Number of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (3.1.2.1)
2) Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (3.1.2.2)
3) Intensity of persecution (3.1.2.3)
4) Frequency of persecution (3.1.2.4).

The score for each question is made up of the average of the sub-scores for each of the four elements.

3.1.2.1 Number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution

The first element is the number of categories of Christian communities (CCCs) affected by persecution. WWL methodology distinguishes between four categories of Christian communities (see Section 1.5.1). Sometimes all four exist in a country, sometimes not. The respondent is asked to indicate which categories exist in the country. Diagram 20 shows the possible division of scores for different situations, i.e. the presence of 1 to 4 categories of Christian communities in the country and the proportion of these affected by persecution.

Diagram 20: Scoring for the number of categories of Christian communities (CCC) affected by persecution

Points	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

For example: If all four categories of Christian communities (CCCs) exist in a country, each category affected receives one point. If a particular situation only concerns two of those four categories in the application of the scoring grid, the answer would produce a sub-score for this element of 2 points. If there is only one CCC in a country, and a specific situation concerns this category (e.g. Christian converts in Somalia), the answer is immediately 1 out of 1 category affected, making a sub-score of 4 points.

There might also be only two or three different CCCs in a country. The respondent will then act according to the method mentioned above.

3.1.2.2 Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution

The second element in the scoring grid is the proportion of the general population living in the territory affected by persecution. This demographic proportion is related to clearly identifiable geographical areas.

A case of discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution may be prevalent in a limited part of the country or in the whole country. The population living in this part or the country as a whole can vary between:

- Above 0% - 25%
- 26% - 50%
- 51% - 75%
- 76%-100%

3.1.2.3 Intensity of persecution

The third element in the scoring grid is the intensity of the persecution situation, which can be described as low, medium, high or very high.

The answer options for this element are defined as follows:

- **Low -** if the issue in question can be dealt with or processed quite easily;
- **Medium -** if the issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but less easily than if it were low;
- **High -** if the issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with difficulty;

- **Very high -** if the issue in question can only be dealt with or processed with very great difficulty.

The answer options are applied to the different categories of questions in the WWL questionnaire as shown in Diagram 21. Not all categories will apply to each question, but at least one will.

Diagram 21: Table showing the answer options for intensity of persecution applied to the different categories of questions in the WWL questionnaire

Intensity	Risk / danger	Hindrance	Discrimination in public life, community resources, institutions, services	Harassment or abuse	Monitoring	Legal provisions (content/ nature)
Low	There are some consequences	There is hindrance but it is bearable	Christian or church is partly disadvantaged, low degree of marginalization and/or exclusion	There is harassment or abuse but it is bearable	Monitoring is done by a few or not very dangerous actors	Christians are disadvantaged by some laws
Medium	Consequences are significant but manageable	Life is being made difficult	Degree of marginalization and/or exclusion is significant but manageable	Harassment or abuse is significant but manageable	Monitoring is significant but can be coped with	The negative effect of some laws is significant but manageable
High	Consequences are severe	Life is being made very difficult	Degree of marginalization and/or exclusion is high	Harassment or abuse is severe	Monitoring is extensive	Some laws put Christians at severe disadvantage or danger
Very high	Consequences are very serious	Life is made (almost) impossible	Degree of marginalization and/or exclusion is very high	Harassment or abuse is very serious	Monitoring is very extensive	There are very severe laws with anti-Christian content

3.1.2.4 Frequency of persecution

The fourth element in the scoring grid is the frequency of the persecution situation under scrutiny in the respective question, which can be described as sporadic, quite frequent, frequent or permanent.

The answer options of this element are defined as follows:

- **Sporadic -** if the issue in question is true, but only every now and then;
- **Quite frequent -** if the issue in question is quite often true (more so than just sporadically);
- **Frequent -** if the issue in question is more often true than it is 'not true';
- **Permanent -** if the issue in question is always true (or true with rare exceptions).

The answer options are applied to the different categories of questions in the WWL questionnaire as shown in Diagram 22.

Diagram 22: Table showing the answer options for frequency of persecution applied to the different categories of questions in the WWL questionnaire

Frequency	Risk / danger	Hindrance	Discrimination in public life, community resources, institutions, services	Harassment or abuse	Monitoring	Legal provisions (implementation)
Sporadic	There is a rare danger or risk	Activities etc. are rarely hindered	Discrimination of Christians rarely happens	Harassment or abuse is rare	Monitoring is rare	Respective laws are rarely implemented
Quite frequent	The danger or risk is quite frequent	Activities etc. are quite frequently hindered	Discrimination of Christians happens quite frequently	Harassment or abuse happens quite frequently	Monitoring happens quite frequently	Respective laws are quite frequently implemented
Frequent	The danger or risk is frequent	Activities etc. are frequently hindered	Discrimination of Christians happens frequently	Harassment or abuse happens frequently	Monitoring happens frequently	Respective laws are frequently implemented
Permanent	The danger or risk is permanent	Activities etc. are always hindered	Discrimination of Christians is permanent	Harassment or abuse is permanent	Monitoring is permanent	Respective laws are (nearly) always implemented

3.1.3 The basic method of calculation

In this section, it is first shown how the basic method of calculation functions to achieve the scoring grid's desired outcome (3.1.3.1). The WWL calculation model is then introduced (3.1.3.2).

3.1.3.1 Desired outcome of the scoring grid

The scoring grid was designed to fulfill the following requirements:

- On the micro-level: To obtain answers "No" or "Yes" (on various levels) to individual questions, whereby "yes" can be on a scale between 1 and 4. This gives an insight into the details of persecution in the different spheres of life.
- On the macro-level: To obtain a final score at country level for transnational comparison of persecution in individual countries.

The four variable answer elements (VAEs) belonging to the scoring grid were selected for their analytical value and for the feasibility of their measurement ('feasible' meaning it can be sufficiently answered for the purposes of the WWL questionnaire). The first two VAEs in the scoring grid (i.e. the number of categories of Christianity affected by persecution and the proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution) are based on observable facts. The last two VAEs in the scoring grid (intensity and frequency of persecution)

are based on the knowledge and assessment of the expert filling out the questionnaire. A justification for the assessment stated is then included in the comments section.

3.1.3.2 Calculation model at the question level[9]

In order to construct a calculation model, the reality described by the scoring grid can be considered four-dimensional. This is only an approximation of a very complex reality. However, using these four dimensions with the four scoring options makes it possible to break down reality to such an extent that it becomes possible to characterize the specific persecution situation within a country. At the same time, the combination of the four variables makes up for the lack of precision of the individual variables to some degree.

The calculation model for the WWL (on question level) was designed in order to satisfy the following conditions:

- All four variables are to have equal weight - there is no justification for giving one variable more weight than the others.
- A linear distribution of results is desirable.
- An average on the middle of the scale is desirable.
- Additionally, for practical purposes the design must strive for simplicity.

Taking into account these considerations, the following calculation model has been chosen:

> **Question Score = (Scores for 'Number of categories of Christianity affected by persecution' + 'Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution' + 'Intensity of persecution' + 'Frequency of persecution') / 4**

For the sake of simplicity, a scale of four points has been adopted for the individual question level. Each answer element allows for four options in case the answer is 'Yes'. That means that each answer element can score 1, 2, 3 or 4 points. In the case of a 'Yes', a question can therefore receive a total score between 4 and 16 points to be divided by 4. In case of a 'No', the answer is automatically 0.

The scores to the answers at the question level, block level and the total score level are taken in their unrounded decimal form for further calculation.[10] All scores are then presented rounded to one decimal place, except for the final country scores appearing on the published WWL. This can mean that the sum of the blocks might not correspond exactly with the rounded total scores for the countries.[11]

3.1.4 Options 'Unknown' and 'N/A'

The options 'Unknown' and 'N/A' can also be chosen by the respondent, and explained in the comments column. The 'Unknown' option is often related to a lack of knowledge of the

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[9] A detailed scoring example can be viewed in Appendix 2.

[10] Experience has shown that rounding numbers to zero decimal places (as was initially intended for the sake of simplicity) led to a lack of precision.
Before the WWL 2018 reporting period, the scores for the 6 blocks were presented rounded to three decimal places. Although this caused the sum of the blocks to correspond exactly with the rounded total scores for the countries on the WWL, it suggested a degree of accuracy that is not achievable due to the margin of uncertainty or error.

respondent. The 'N/A' option is normally given by respondents when they feel that the situation they cover cannot be described by the answers to the questions.
The WWR team tries to resolve these types of response but this is not always possible. The methodology for dealing with unresolved 'Unknown' and 'N/A' responses is explained in Section 3.2.3.

3.1.5 Distribution of scores over the spheres of life and violence

The WWL questionnaire has six blocks that deal with the different spheres of life and violence. The highest possible total score for all blocks together is 100 points. Diagram 23 shows the distribution of these points over the six blocks.

Diagram 23: Distribution of scores over the spheres of life and violence, using a block-specific reduction factor

Block	Name	Number of Questions	Maximum pts (a)	Reduction factor[1/]	Levelled maximal total
1	Private Life	10	40	0.41667	16.667
2	Family Life	13	52	0.32051	16.667
3	Community Life	13	52	0.32051	16.667
4	National Life	16	64	0.26042	16.667
5	Church Life	20	80	0.20833	16.667
6	Plain Violence	12	90	0.18519	16.667
All		**84**	**378**	**N/A**	**100**

[1/] Reduction factor (f) for blocks 1 to 6: f=100/6/a

Each question in block 1 to 5 can either score 0 points ('No') or between 4-16 points (four 'Yes' options). The total score per question is then divided by four to give the average per element, thus reducing the possible final scores per question to 0-4 points.

The block-specific reduction factor: The maximum score per block is defined by the number of questions per block multiplied by 4 points. However, because the number of questions varies from block to block and each block is designed to have equal value, the scores are proportionally reduced to 100/6 = 16.667 points. The reduction factor for each block is thus block-specific.

The actual block total (the total of the answers to all questions in that block for a specific questionnaire) is multiplied by the respective reduction factor to achieve the same weighting for each block. The final score for blocks 1 to 5 is the sum of all block totals of that questionnaire.

Block 6 (violence): The allocation of points per question in block 6 (see list of questions in Diagram 14 on page 29) does not follow the system used for blocks 1-5. The first two questions of block 6, which deal with killings of Christians and attacks on churches and other Christian buildings each weigh as much as the remaining 10 questions taken together. Thus the first two questions can get a maximum of 30 points each, and the other 10 questions share 30 points.

For the first two questions of Block 6 each killing or building attacked scores 3 points. This means that when 10 Christians are killed or 10 churches (including other public Christian properties) are attacked, the score for that question will be the maximum score. This way, the WWL methodology puts extra emphasis on killings and attacks on churches over against other forms of violence, because both are extremes and hit hard, also affecting Christians and churches not directly attacked. For the other 10 questions, the maximum score of 3 points is calculated according to the number of incidents in the following way: 1 case (1 point), 2-9 cases (2 points) and 10 or more cases (3 points).[12]

The capping of scores for violent incidents in the WWL methodology clearly places an emphasis on the pressure Christians experience (*squeeze*) over against violence (*smash*). Ten Christians killed or 10 churches heavily attacked result in the same score as for 100 or 1,000 such incidents. This does not mean that violent persecution is thus heavily underestimated. If in a country the hostilities against Christians are such that tens or hundreds or even thousands are killed or buildings attacked, this is certainly going to influence the general atmosphere in the country. In other words, the pressure or *squeeze* against Christians measured in the other blocks will be high, and as a result the final country score will be high too.

3.2 Sources of expertise in relation to the questionnaires

In the following sections, first the different sources of expertise will be discussed (3.2.1), then how these sources relate to the questionnaires (3.2.2), and thirdly, the topic of 'Unknown' and 'N/A' answers will be dealt with (3.2.3).

3.2.1 Sources of expertise

The final scoring of the WWL questionnaire is the result of the interplay of four sources of expertise (Diagram 24).

Diagram 24: Sources of expertise for completing the WWL questionnaires

Sources of expertise	Contribution
In-country networks (a.k.a. Field contributors)	These contribute as much grass-roots level information as possible
Country researchers	These create draft versions of field-stream questionnaires after assembling input from their in-country networks and adding their own expertise
External experts	These provide Information for cross-checking draft versions of field-stream questionnaires by the WWR persecution analyst through filling out

[12] See Appendix 2, WWL Scoring Example, for a practical application of this Block 6 scoring emphasis.

	full questionnaires or sections of the questionnaire, or by sharing knowledge through personal contact.
WWR persecution analysts	These compile final versions of the questionnaires, after consultation with the other sources of expertise.

The first sources of expertise are the in-country networks and country researchers. The actual WWL questionnaire is filled out by researchers at country level, gathering information through contacts (sometimes referred to as field contributors) who normally represent different in-country networks and who ideally reside in the country concerned wherever possible. The country researchers may do this by sending their field contributors (parts of) the questionnaire, by direct contact or through other ways. The in-country networks give the data-gathering process a 'grassroots' character.

Research staff at regional level coordinate the country level results. They may also be involved in the feedback process with the WWR persecution analysts (together with country level staff) - and carry out a plausibility check. The plausibility check looks at the relative scoring of the different countries in that region.[13]

In-country networks give the data-gathering process a 'grassroots' character.

Diagram 25: Table showing criteria for field contributors

Criteria for Field contributors
They have a good network
Both men and women are represented
They have a good level of reflection
They are spread over different church backgrounds
There is also a representation of converts
They include both clergy and lay people
They are spread over the country
They are taken from the capital city - provincial towns – villages
They represent different professional backgrounds
They are from different age categories

The next source of expertise are the External experts, who contribute in a variety of ways. Ideally they complete the full version of the WWL questionnaire.

[13] A final plausibility check takes place at the end of the WWL process, once the country scores have been calculated and a preliminary ranking table with the scores has been drafted - see 4.2.5.

The external experts have various professional backgrounds. Some are:

- Legal scholars with extensive experience in the field of human rights, constitutional law and governance.
- Public policy researchers.
- International development experts.
- Lecturers for different disciplines (some are professors at universities).
- International security experts.
- Christian ministry workers (missionaries, some of them with many years of experience in the country).
- Heads of Christian NGOs in the country.
- Staff of national or international human rights organizations dealing with freedom of religion or belief.

The final source of expertise is the team of persecution analysts at WWR. They work towards a final version of the field-stream questionnaires by compiling the data from the different sources of information and giving feedback to the respondents. Their own continual monitoring of countries also contributes to the final results. The core of the WWR team consists of a small number of analysts all with university degrees, three with PhDs. A Research Fellow also brings in a wealth of experience. In addition, two researchers are responsible for questionnaire analysis and the production of reports on Gender-specific, Children/Youth-specific and IDP/Refugee-specific religious persecution (see sections 5.6 and 5.7 and 5.8).

3.2.2 Division of roles

The mainstay of the data of the World Watch List is the input given by Open Doors field staff and their network of in-country contacts which gives the WWL its grassroots character. The WWL questionnaire is a field-stream questionnaire, which tries to penetrate as deeply into the country as it can. As explained above, those filling out the questionnaire are country researchers and their in-country networks (Field contributors). Thus the data-gathering process can be said to have a 'grassroots' character.

External experts provide alternative results over against the field-stream questionnaires. These results are used by the persecution analysts to do cross-checks of the field-stream question-naires provided by the country researchers.

The persecution analysts at WWR produce a consolidated response sheet and scoring, critically verifying and reconciling the responses received from the various contributors. The persecution analysts can suggest variations in the application of the scoring grid to the respondents. This is a technical intervention and is needed to remedy inconsistencies in the answering process and is done in agreement with the respondents. The persecution analysts, being experts themselves, may also suggest variations in the scoring of the respondents in relation to their own knowledge and insight, but only apply changes *in agreement* with the respondents. This means that the role of the persecution analyst is not merely reactive but can also be proactive.

3.2.3 Dealing with responses 'Unknown' and 'N/A'

This section deals with the occurrence of 'Unknown' or 'N/A' as responses to the WWL questions (see also previous discussion in 3.1.4). It starts with the response 'Unknown' (3.2.3.1), and then continues with 'N/A' (3.2.3.2).

3.2.3.1 Dealing with responses 'Unknown'

When questions are answered with 'Unknown', there are three options for resolving these answers:

- Option 1 - Preferred route: Resolution;
- Option 2 - If this is not possible, and there are sufficient other respondents: Consideration of other responses;
- Option 3 - If the answer cannot be known, the question is discounted and the block-specific reduction factor[14] adjusted.

Option 1 - Resolution

WWR prefers to continue working with respondents on questionnaires until all responses of 'Unknown' are resolved by consensus with the respondent. This can work if:

- The respondent cooperates;
- The response is indeed 'knowable', which means that it is a matter of information lacking on the part of the individual respondent and not a matter of (sufficiently precise) information simply not being available for the period under examination in the respective country.

Option 2 - Considering other responses

If a resolution is not possible, and there are sufficient other respondents, WWR will take into consideration the other responses. For instance, if there are three respondents, and the first scores 3, the second scores 2, and the third scores 'Unknown' for a question, then this third expert is considered to have insufficient data, and his input for this question will be left out. Instead the input of the other respondents is considered as complementary expertise. Therefore, if there is one expert that turns out to have insufficient knowledge, the expertise of the two others outbalances this response.

Option 3 - Question discounted

The answer 'Unknown' will always be discussed with the respondent, and if possible changed to an actual score. If however, this is not possible and happens for the same question with all respondents or if it is not possible to reach an agreement, then the question is not taken into account in the final score.

In this case, the reduction factor for that block is adjusted for that single questionnaire, so that all remaining questions of that block will together make up a full maximum block score of 16.667 points. This is done in order to prevent an artificially low score for countries that are secretive and hide their pressure and violence well.

[14] The block-specific reduction factor is discussed in Section 3.1.5 above.

Reliability of results

All three options for dealing with the response 'Unknown' influence the degree of reliability of the results, albeit in varying degrees. For options 1 and 2 this can be considered sufficiently resolved through the contributed expertise of WWR staff and/or other respondents. For option 3 it could contribute to a lower reliability that has to be accounted for when there is a significant number of questions with response 'Unknown'. In the years that the current WWL methodology has been in operation, such a situation has never occurred.

3.2.3.2 Dealing with responses 'N/A'

When questions are answered with 'N/A', it means that the respondent thinks the question does not match the situation under study. This may or may not be correct.

In many cases the answer 'N/A' is given because the situation is so severe that the questions reflecting the nuances of the respective sphere of life simply seem not to respond to the situation. The most extreme situation in this respect occurs when church life is simply made totally impossible by government or social groups. In that case the questions in the block on the Church sphere of life (block 5) will normally get the maximum score.

There may be other reasons why the 'N/A' option is chosen for answering questions. In such cases the WWR persecution analyst proceeds in a similar fashion to that described above for the response 'Unknown'. This basically entails either resolving the issue with the respondent or, if this cannot be done, seeing if the other respondents to the same question have a convincing response. If this also does not result in a sufficient answer, the question is discounted.

In terms of reliability of the results, for options 1 and 2 this can be considered sufficiently resolved through the contributed expertise of the WWR staff and/or other respondents. In specific cases, the occurrence of option 3 might contribute to a lower level of reliability.

4. Work flow and information gathering process

There are two distinct stages in the information gathering process: Defining the determinants of persecution (4.1) and processing the WWL questionnaires (4.2). In this section, a time frame is presented for the WWL process (4.3). Finally some remarks are made about training field researchers and external experts in accomplishing the WWL tasks (4.4).

4.1 Preparation: Defining determinants of persecution

Before filling out the questionnaires, respondents need to identify three major determinants of the persecution situation:

- Persecution engines - which distinct situations are active in the country that cause Christians to be persecuted (main and secondary persecution engines)?
- Drivers of persecution - which people or groups are involved in the hostilities against Christians?

- Categories of Christianity - which WWL categories of Christianity are present in the country?

Clearly defining these determinants will help the respondent in keeping a sharp focus while filling out the questionnaire. The respondents define the determinants in consultation with the WWR persecution analysts.

4.2 Processing the WWL questionnaire

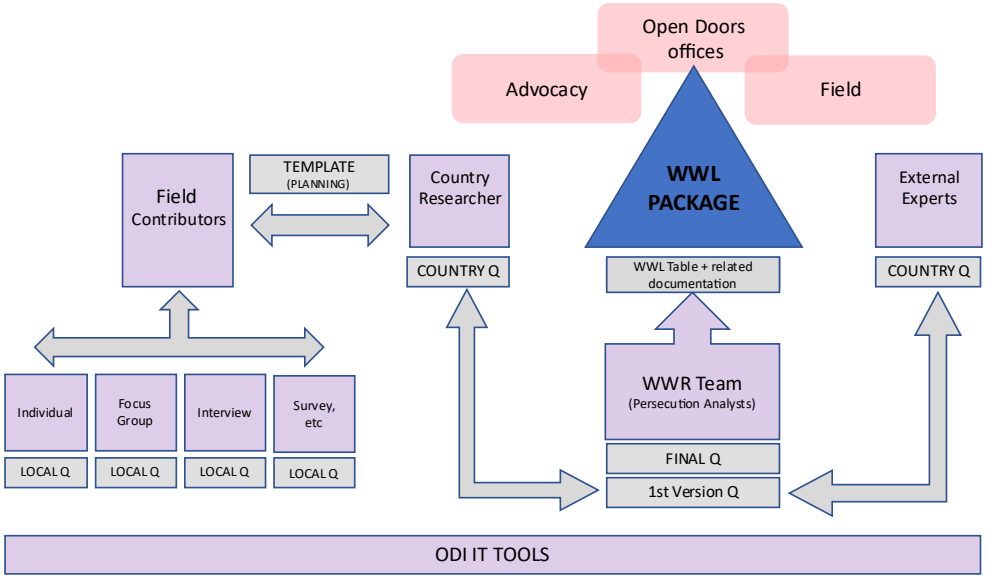
An overview of the WWL process is presented in Diagram 26, where the abbreviation "Q" is used for "Questionnaire". A closer look at the time-frame is presented in Diagram 27 in section 4.3.

4.2.1 Sending WWL questionnaire to field staff and receiving first results

As can be seen in Diagram 26 below, the operational process for the field-stream questionnaires starts with the online WWL questionnaire being made available to researchers in the countries under investigation and asking them to fill out the questionnaires for each country. This process is supported by a robust IT set-up.

- The WWR persecution analyst makes the WWL questionnaire available to the regional researcher. The questionnaire is available in different languages (see Section 2.6). A downloadable version is available.
- The regional researcher invites country researchers (or other staff) to fill out the questionnaire at country level.
- The country researcher invites field contributors to fill out the questionnaire. Field contributors can contribute individually or as groups. Each country requires at least 10 field contributors (see Section 3.2.1 for criteria). The field contributors may be asked to fill out part of a questionnaire or a full questionnaire adapted to their expertise or exposure to this sort of exercise. There is even the possibility of taking the scoring grid out and asking respondents to only focus on answering "Yes" or "No" with comments. Sometimes face-to-face conversations can replace questionnaires being filled out by field contributors. The country researcher is then responsible for integrating the results of these conversations into questionnaires.
- Field contributors fill out their version of the questionnaire, and make it available to the country researcher.
- The country researcher integrates responses from the various field contributors in order to make one Field version of the questionnaire (the so-called field-stream questionnaire) for the country. The IT set-up greatly facilitates this process.
- The country researcher then presents the field-stream questionnaire to the regional researcher.
- The regional researcher checks the main results for the country. Now the first version of the field-stream questionnaire for that country is completed.

Diagram 26: Overview of the World Watch List process



Developed by Open Doors International

4.2.2 First check of Field input by World Watch Research

The WWR persecution analyst then has access to the completed field-stream questionnaires and performs the first check. The persecution analyst:

- Checks the completed questionnaire for each country for:
  - Consistency in answers with comments;
  - Consistency in (technical) application of scoring grid;
  - Consistency in answers with information block 7;
  - Consistency in answers with own knowledge and input from external experts (4.2.3).
- Discusses proposed corrections of the questionnaire with the country researcher.
- The country researcher checks the main results of this interaction with the regional researcher.
- This cycle might be repeated several times in case of persisting differences of opinion.

4.2.3 Cross-check by WWR analyst through information from external experts

WWL Methodology recognizes the importance of cross-checks for field team results by comparing them with information from external experts. Each country requires at least three external experts for adequate WWR cross-checking. If there is no field presence in a country, or if for certain reasons a field team is unable to complete a full field-stream questionnaire, the minimum is four external experts. The operational process for obtaining information from external experts runs parallel to the field process:

- The WWR persecution analyst invites external experts to complete questionnaires. This is normally the full version with scoring grid. Sometimes the full version without the scoring grid (or even a customized version tailored to the expertise of the external expert) is provided.
- External experts complete their versions of the questionnaire.

- The WWR persecution analyst discusses the results of the completed questionnaires with the external expert.
- The WWR persecution analyst adapts the field-stream questionnaire (completed by the country researcher in the parallel process) based on the results of the questionnaires completed by the external experts.
- The WWR persecution analyst discusses the adapted version of the field-stream questionnaire with the country researcher.
- The country researcher checks the main results of this discussion with the regional researcher.
- This cycle might be repeated several times in cases of persisting differences of opinion.
- The result is now a new version of the field-stream questionnaire that replaces the initial field-stream questionnaire.

4.2.4 Final completion by country researcher and checking by WWR

Since the information-gathering period starts before the end of the WWL reporting period, a final update to the field-stream questionnaires is needed to complete them (for including any changes to the persecution situation in the last months or weeks of the reporting period):

- The WWR persecution analysts ask the country researchers for changes needed according to how the pressure or violence against Christians and/or churches has developed in the remaining period.
- The country researchers consult with the regional researchers and propose changes to the new versions of the field-stream questionnaires.
- The WWR persecution analysts discuss the proposed changes with the country researchers and make adaptions to create a new version of the field-stream questionnaires.

The country scores are taken from the now finalized field-stream questionnaires.

4.2.5 Plausibility check and follow-up by WWR

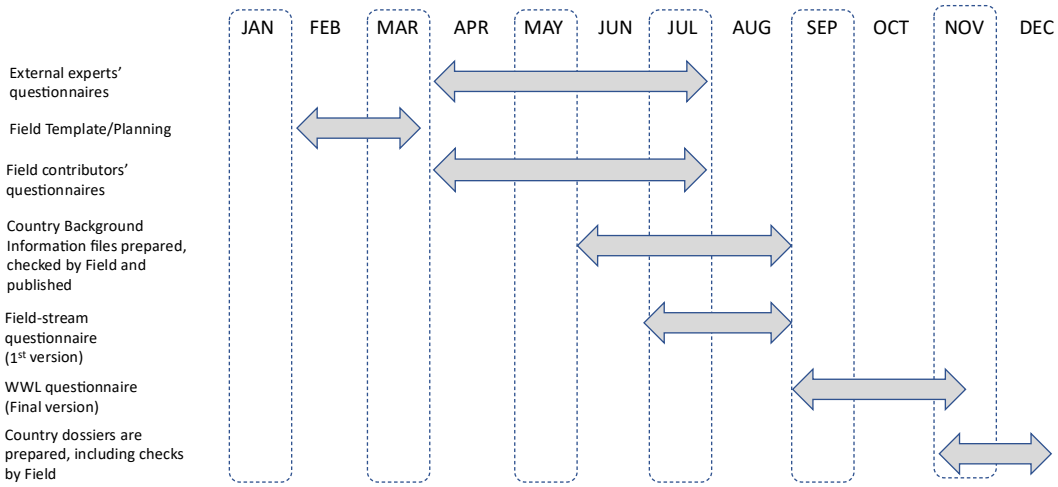
Once the country scores have been calculated, a preliminary ranking table with the scores is drafted. For each country the block scores as well as the overall score are provided. The following steps finalize the WWL process:

- Ranking table to be discussed with internal and/or external experts on countries, regions and/or world. They will discuss if the outcome reflects the real situation i.e. the assumed correct sequence of scored WWL countries. *Document provided: Draft version of the ranking table with the scores.*
- In cases of doubt, the WWR persecution analysts revisit the country questionnaires, and check with the country and/or regional researchers to see if misinterpretations occurred. If not, no changes will be made. If however misinterpretations are found, changes will be made and clearly recorded to prevent any undue manipulation of results.
- If needed, a new final ranking table is produced, including scores.

4.3 Time-frame for the WWL process

The time-frame for the WWL process is presented in Diagram 27. The WWL process starts with the completion of the field template which is a planning tool for the involvement of field contributors (February/March). A parallel process then begins where field contributors and external experts fill out questionnaires (April - July) and – from WWL 2025 onwards – Background Information files per country are prepared and published (June – August). A first version of the field-stream questionnaire is completed by the end of August and a final version is in place by mid-November. The aim is then to have a final version of the country dossiers checked by field staff by mid December.

Diagram 27: Time-frame for the WWL process



Source: Open Doors International

4.4 Learning-by-doing and peer review

For the persecution analysts of WWR, working on the WWL with external experts has an element of on-the-job coaching. WWR works with the external experts to give them a good understanding of the whole WWL process. After one or two successive years, the external experts are then in a position to fill out the complete WWL questionnaire confidently for future WWLs.

For field staff, this on-the-job training and mutual learning-by-doing has already been taking place for years. Every successive year, however, adds to this experience, especially when major changes are made to the methodology as was the case for WWL 2013 onwards.

WWR regularly organizes training sessions with field colleagues responsible for filling out the questionnaires. This can be through internet platforms or face-to-face. These sessions are for explanations, questions-and-answers, and for the exchange of experiences concerning the WWL questionnaire and methodology. Meanwhile internal peer review by the WWR persecution analysts is important for the comparability of the results of the different countries. The team sits together (or uses virtual team meetings) to discuss answers to questions for selected countries.

During the WWL process, WWR regularly encounters situations that are difficult to match with the questions, or questions that could be considered ambiguous in the light of certain realities. The team discusses these cases, and decides on the team response towards them. The results of these discussions are recorded for future use.

5. Analysis and communication of results

Five key elements for the analysis and communication of the WWL results are the persecution pattern (5.1), the listing of countries according to scores (5.2), the grouping of country scores (5.3), the ranking of countries (5.4) and the production of country dossiers (5.5).

5.1 Persecution pattern analysis

5.1.1 Persecution pattern for one WWL reporting period

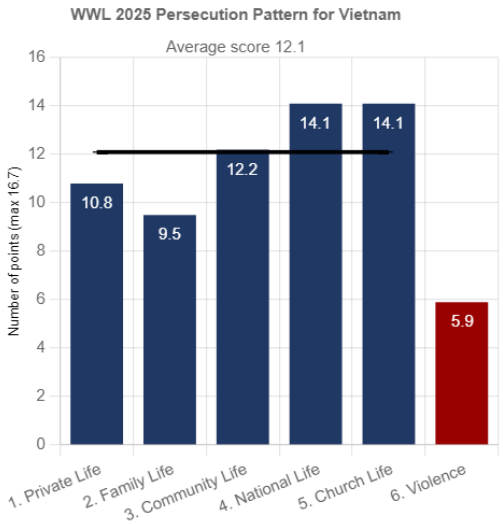
The detailed country scores of the 6 blocks of the WWL questionnaire converge into a specific pattern, the *country persecution pattern*. This persecution pattern consists of the following elements:

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

These elements are characteristic for the persecution situation in the country.

The example below is for Vietnam (WWL 2025).[15] In Vietnam, Communist and post-Communist oppression is the main persecution engine (Very strong). Clan oppression, Dictatorial paranoia and Organized corruption and crime are secondary engines (Medium).

Diagram 28: WWL 2025 Persecution pattern for Vietnam



[15] This information is taken from the WWL 2025 Vietnam – Persecution Dynamics published in January 2025, available at https://www.opendoors.org/persecution/reports/Vietnam-Full_Country_Dossier-ODI-2025.pdf, p.15.

The WWL 2025 Persecution pattern for Vietnam shows:

- *Pressure on Christians in Vietnam has remained very high, although the average pressure decreased by 0.1 of a point to 12.1 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 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, strict government regulations with cumbersome requirements for churches, and an ongoing suspicion towards all Christians (particularly converts) as well as to all ethnic and religious minorities.*
- *The violence score decreased from 7.2 points in WWL 2024 to 5.9 points in WWL 2025. There was one killing reported and several churches were attacked. However, it has always been very difficult to get information from all parts of the country, especially the regions where ethnic minorities live.*

Apart from presenting the resulting scores, the Persecution pattern has potential for use as part of the consistency check for questionnaires. The Persecution pattern can also serve to predict trends in ongoing persecution in countries or serve as a tool for 'early warning' about upcoming persecution in other countries.

5.1.2 Persecution pattern over 5 years

A five year Persecution pattern history has become standard for country research. An example of the section "5 Year Trends" from the WWL 2025 Vietnam – Persecution Dynamics follows below (Diagrams 29-31) with explanation.

Diagram 29: Vietnam - WWL 2021-WWL 2025 Average pressure on Christians (over Blocks 1-5)

Vietnam: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	12.1
2024	12.2
2023	12.6
2022	12.4
2021	12.4

Diagram 29 above shows how the average level of pressure on Christians has been fairly stable at a very high level over the last five reporting periods. It had plateaued at 12.4 points in the period WWL 2020-2022 and is now stable at a slightly lower level (12.2/12.1 points).

Diagram 30: Vietnam - WWL 2021-WWL 2025 Spheres of life (Blocks 1-5)

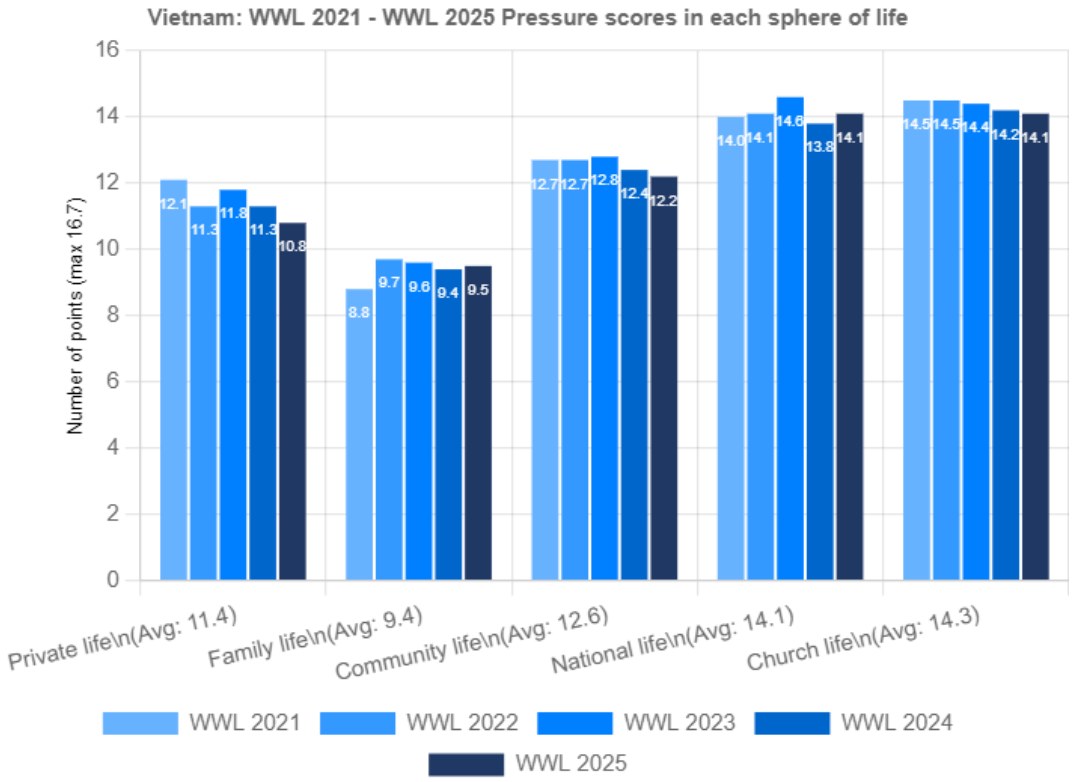
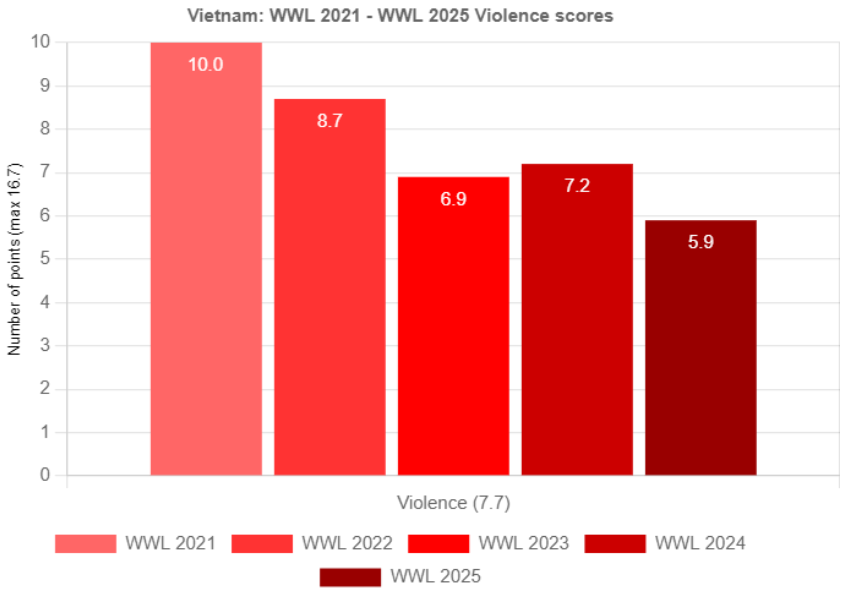


Diagram 30 above shows that the pressure on Christians in all spheres of life (except in Family life) has consistently been at a very high level or higher over the last five reporting periods. The pressure in the National sphere of life dropped in WWL 2024 after increasing each year since WWL 2020, but rose again to 14.1 points in WWL 2025. The pressure in Church life is at a consistently extreme level above 14 points. This reflects the severity of the state restrictions on Christians.

Diagram 31: Vietnam - WWL 2021-WWL 2025 Violence (Block 6)



Persecution in Vietnam has always involved violence. The chart above shows very high scores over all 5 WWL reporting periods, but with a general decreasing trend. 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 scores are possibly indicating a lower level of violence against Christians than in reality.

5.2 Listing countries according to scores

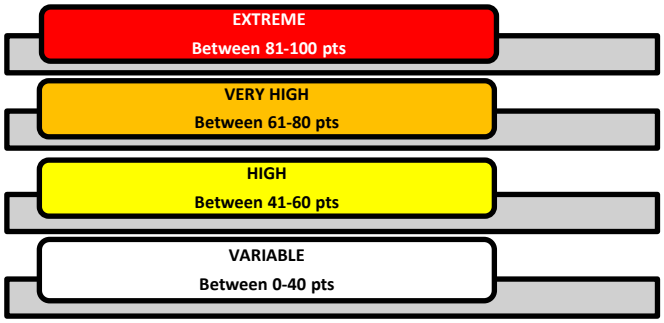
As a result of the WWL process each country gets a specific final score. This final score is used to determine the order of countries from position 1 to 50 and beyond on the annual WWL. In Appendix 3 an example of the most recent WWL can be viewed.

WWL methodology makes it possible to compare different persecution realities, because it takes its starting point in the pressure and violence Christians experience in their different *spheres of life*. Whether this pressure or violence originates from the same or different persecution engines is not relevant for the final scores. It follows that all countries of the world can be compared for pressure and violence against Christians regardless of the origin of these hostilities.

5.3 Grouping of country scores

As displayed in Diagram 32 below, the degree of persecution is characterized by a scale of 0 to 100 points, directly linked to the set of 84 questions covering pressure in the five spheres of life and the prevalence of violent incidents. This scale of 0 to 100 points is split up into four categories, which are based on specific scoring intervals.

Diagram 32: WWL Persecution categories with their scoring intervals



Developed by World Watch Research

The meaning of the persecution categories is as follows:

- *Extreme*: Points range 81-100 shows where there is literally no free exercise of Christian faith allowed in society. Most churches are banned, or so controlled as to have no freedom of expression at all. The very fact of being a Christian draws persecution. In some cases it means that although the Christian faith can still be exercised in (part of) society, the level of violence against Christians is so high, that it causes the country score to rise into (the lower echelons of) this points range.

- *Very High:* Points range 61-80 shows where the exercise of Christian faith is so difficult that most Christians fear to witness for their faith. In some cases persecution is restricted to particular areas of the country where campaigns waged against Christians may be very violent and long term.

- *High:* Points range 41 to 60 shows where living as a Christian means that although there may be a tolerated church which enjoys some freedom, in practice prominent Christians are targeted, churches themselves subject to significant restrictions, and the culture remains largely hostile to Christian presence in such areas as education and employment. In some countries persecution is severe but restricted to particular geographical areas.

- *Variable:* Points range 0 to 40 shows situations ranging from where the religious freedom of Christians is fully accepted to situations where this freedom is infringed, but not to the same degree as in the categories above. Sometimes this infringement is very serious but only in small geographical areas.

WWL methodology makes it possible to compare different persecution realities, because it takes its starting point from the pressure and violence Christians experience in their different *spheres of life*.

It is important to realize that the WWL is an index of all countries scoring 41 points or more, i.e. all countries where Christians experience high, very high or extreme levels of persecution. Since the published table of Top 50 countries usually starts where countries score somewhere between 60-65 points, an annual list of so-called Persecution Watch Countries is also published to cover those countries scoring 50 points or more but not enough to be included in the Top 50. In those countries a high level of persecution of Christians and churches is also prevalent.

5.4 Ranking of countries

Countries are ranked according to their final scores. The most important reason for ranking countries is to be able to present a complex reality to the broader public. For this to be done effectively, the WWL rankings must always be used together with the corresponding country dossiers which explain the particularities of the persecution situation (see Section 5.5).

The ranking gives the possibility of comparing the levels of persecution in various countries within a given reporting period. It should however be noted that any comparison of rankings from different WWL reporting periods would be misleading and must be avoided. This is because a system of ranking provides relative positions based on a set of country scores which differ from year to year. Only the country scores offer the basis for reliable comparison between different WWL reporting periods.

It can for instance happen that a country receives a lower position on the WWL even though the country scores are higher than in the WWL of the year before. When this happens, it simply indicates that other countries have received an even higher score and have, therefore, ended up higher on the WWL.

When comparing country ranking within the same WWL, it can happen that several countries with close scores nevertheless occupy different positions on the WWL. The differences between these ranks are then not necessarily very meaningful. This is due to the margin of statistical error inherent in any such exercise.

Any comparison of rankings from different WWL reporting periods would be misleading and must be avoided.

The relevance of the WWL ranking is reflected more adequately by considering them in close connection with both block scores and the end-scores. Scores can also be compared meaningfully over the years within certain limits. The WWL has been in production since WWL 1993. Comparison of the data since WWL 1993 yields interesting results, although there have been changes in the methodology over the years.

5.5 The Country Dossier

A country dossier is prepared annually for each one of the 50 top-scoring countries. These dossiers are made available in January each year to coincide with the publication of the latest World Watch List.

Country dossiers are uploaded for public use at https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/ and can also be accessed on most national Open Doors office websites (often in translation).

5.6 Documentation of Gender-specific religious persecution (GSRP)

Using information gathered from the WWL country questionnaires, qualitative data is also obtained which captures characteristics, tactics and dynamics of religious persecution specific to either men or women. In the last few years, this data has been coded and analyzed through a framework of 30 Pressure Points to allow for quantitative analysis by country. These Pressure Point categories provide a means to establish the frequency with which a particular form of pressure is associated with each gender. It also captures variations across countries in how this pressure is brought to bear in different contexts. The categories and the resulting statistics and charts allow researchers to observe and track overall trends in the patterns and dynamics of global religious persecution and discrimination. This information is then presented in separate GSRP-reports.[16]

5.7 Documentation of Children and Youth-specific religious persecution (C/YSRP)

Since 2021, WWL country questionnaire information is also analyzed to reveal how children and youth who are Christian (or who are associated with Christian communities or families) experience persecution. For this purpose, 27 C/YSRP Pressure Points were devised, adapted from the GSRP framework. In-depth analysis of this data points to persecution targeting young people's identities, their gateways to access a religious education, and their pathways into

[16] GSRP reports - along with the methodology used - can be found under https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/gender-persecution/.

future jobs and family roles. A first report was presented in September 2021, showing that education is a key opportunity for persecution.[17]

5.8 Documentation of IDP and Refugee-specific religious persecution (IDP/R-SRP)

Since 2022, data gathered from WWL country questionnaires has also revealed that in many contexts, Christians are more likely to be forced out of their homes/countries, and more likely to experience psychological and physical violence once displaced, on account of their religious identity and activity. Their protection needs have often been poorly understood, or even willfully ignored. For analysis, an adapted version of the SRP Pressure Points framework was used, incorporating 32 Pressure Points. A first report was published in June 2022.[18]

6. Process of evaluation and the Internal Confidence Rate

World Watch Research has developed a system of credibility rating. This is an Open Doors internal rating called the Internal Confidence Rate (ICR). It assesses the credibility of WWL results at country level (Diagram 33). --

Diagram 33: Elements making up the Internal Confidence Rate (ICR)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Final results questionnaire of foregoing WWL (includes plausibility check): 0 or 1 data point	Number of Field contributors	Number of data points related to Field contributors (after applying reduction factors)	Questionnaire country field researcher: 0 or 1 data point	Check of questionnaire by layers between country and regional field researcher: 0, 1 or more data points	Check of questionnaire by regional field researcher: 0 or 1 data point	Number of EE	Number of data points related to External experts (after applying reduction factors)	Questionnaire of persecution analyst (final version as result of putting everything together): 0 or 1 data point	TOTAL SCORE FOR ICR

As illustrated above, the total score for the ICR is made up of the following elements:

A. The existence of a finalized questionnaire from the foregoing year is considered a data point. It provides a baseline against which to assess change.
B. The number of field contributors. In the diagram this column is shaded gray because this number only counts as a data point after applying a reduction factor (see next point).
C. The number of field contributors is only considered a data point after applying a reduction factor (between 0 and 1 in decimals) which takes into consideration (among other things) the number of questions answered and the quality of the answers given - including the correct application of the scoring grid, the addition of comments accompanying questions scored, the correlation between scores and comments, and the diversity of the contributors.
D. The questionnaire completed by the country researcher counts as a data point.

[17] Reports and methodology can be found under www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/children- youth/.
[18] Reports and methodology are available at: www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/idp-persecution/.

E. Sometimes the field research structure has one or more additional organizational layers between the country researcher and the regional researcher. If these layers are involved in the completion of the country questionnaire, additional data points are given.
F. The active involvement of the regional researcher in the production of the questionnaire counts as a data point.
G. The number of external experts. The column in the diagram this column is shaded gray because this number only counts as a data point after applying a reduction factor (see next point).
H. The number of external experts is only considered a data point after applying a reduction factor (between 0 and 1 in decimals) which takes into consideration (among other things) the number of questions answered and the quality of the answers given - including the correct application of the scoring grid, the addition of comments accompanying questions scored, the correlation between scores and comments, and the diversity of the contributors.
I. The final version of the questionnaire, completed by the persecution analyst after putting everything together, gives one data point.
J. All these elements lead up to the total score for the ICR.

The WWL methodology does not propose an absolute minimum value for the ICR at country level. Rather than obtaining absolute values, importance is laid on getting a higher ICR each year or on maintaining it at a high level.

7. In conclusion

WWL methodology has evolved over a period of 30 years and serves as the research background for the annual World Watch List published by Open Doors offices around the world and for the strategic planning of Open Doors fieldwork. Documentation based on this methodology is also being increasingly used for advocacy purposes.[19]

Although part of Open Doors International, the WWR team functions as an independent unit and takes responsibility for all research results. Safeguards are in place to prevent the possibility of interference or manipulation of results by interested parties. Published documentation for WWL 2013-2025 is available at the Open Doors Analytical website and includes a short animation showing how the persecution of Christians has developed over the years.[20]

In an effort to enhance the quality of the WWL and contribute to the degree of objectivity and transparency of the results, the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF)[21] has audited WWL methodology and its proper application on varying sample countries since 2014. The main

[19] See: https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/advocacy-resources/.
[20] See: https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/ (password: freedom).
[21] For information about IIRF, see www.iirf.eu.

focus of the annual audit has been on consistency in the processing of the WWL questionnaires for the different countries with their specific persecution situations.[22]

WWR's commitment is to a robust WWL methodology that can stand up to academic scrutiny. The team of analysts is always looking to make improvements and welcomes any serious suggestions which can be sent in by email to research@od.org.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Word version of the current full WWL questionnaire 611

Appendix 2: WWL scoring example 955

Appendix 3: Final table of scores for WWL 2025 1011

Appendix 4: Glossary of definitions and terms used in WWL methodology 1033

Appendix 1:
Word version of the current full WWL questionnaire

Questionnaire for the World Watch List - full version

1. Country you are reporting on:
2. Date of this report:
3. Name, position and institution of person completing the report:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is the Open Doors Questionnaire on the freedom of Christians to practise their faith in specific countries and on the degree of discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution experienced.

Please ONLY report on the period 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025 (for WWL 2026)

You have several options to answer each question: "No", "Yes", "Unknown" and "N/A" (which stands for Not Applicable). Please select the option that reflects reality in the country best according to you. DO NOT select more than one option. Try to avoid as much as possible the options "Unknown" and "N/A".

[22] The interpretation of WWL data and documentation by Open Doors offices around the world remains outside the scope of the annual IIRF audit.

Please help us by providing more information in the boxes for comments, so we can understand why you opted for a specific answer. You can give extra comments through the questions in block 7, which are not scored, but will greatly enhance our understanding of the situation.

There are five spheres of life we evaluate, and two additional blocks:
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)* covers many forms of explicit physical violence
Block 7: Additional questions that are not scored but provide background information.

The questions in Blocks 1-5 are meant to measure the less violent forms of persecution of Christians. Block 6 focusses on incidents regarding different forms of explicit violence against Christians. The questions try to grasp structural and incidental impediments to the freedom of Christians to live their life in each sphere of life. In addition to providing a score for each question, please use the comments section to explain your answers!

Each block scores the same number of points, even when the number of questions is different. The ***final*** maximum total score is 100. This means that the final maximum score for each block is 16.7 points. Consequently, the resulting score for each block will be proportionally adapted.

HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR EACH QUESTION?

The answering of all questions in blocks 1 to 5 has been standardized. Here is an explanation on how the methodology is constructed. The following scoring grid may help you to choose between the different options for “Yes” and “No”:

	No	**Yes, somewhat or rarely**	**Yes, significantly**	**Yes, very significantly**	**Yes, absolutely**
	0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**	**3 points**	**4 points**
(1) Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution	None	up to 1/4	>1/4 - 2/4	>2/4 - 3/4	>3/4 - 1
(2) Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution	None	up to 25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

(3) Intensity of persecution	None	Low	Medium	High	Very high
(4) Frequency of persecution	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent	Permanent

The answer to each question in blocks 1 to 5 is the average of the four elements: (1) Proportion of the categories of Christianity affected by persecution, (2) Proportion of the general population living in the territory affected by persecution, (3) Degree of intensity of persecution, and (4) Degree of frequency of persecution. The soft copy version of this questionnaire will automatically ask you to answer all four elements, and calculate the average. This hard copy version (print) does not have this function.
The first element, "Categories of Christian communities" needs some explanation (more explanation about the different categories is given later). We distinguish between four basic categories of Christian community:

- Communities of expatriate Christians.
- Historical Christian communities.
- Converts.
- Non-traditional Christian communities (such as Evangelicals, Baptists, Pentecostals) and/or other Christian communities not included in the above three groups.

The table below shows the possible division of scores for different situations i.e. presence of 1 to 4 categories of Christian communities (abbreviated to "Christianity" in the following table) in the country, and proportion of these categories affected by persecution:

Select from the following answer elements	**4 categories of Christianity are present in the country**	**3 categories of Christianity are present in the country**	**2 categories of Christianity are present in the country**	**1 category of Christianity is present in the country**
0 - 1/4	1 out of 4 categories affected	-	-	-
>1/4 - 2/4	2 out of 4 categories affected	1 out of 3 categories affected	1 out of 2 categories affected	-
>2/4 - 3/4	3 out of 4 categories affected	2 out of 3 categories affected	-	-
>3/4 - 1	4 out of 4 categories affected	3 out of 3 categories affected	2 out of 2 categories affected	1 category affected

For instance, if all four categories exist, each category stands for ¼ (= 0.25). If a certain situation concerns two of those four in the application of the scoring grid, the answer would be 2/4 (= 0.5) and thus produce a sub-score for this element of 2 points ("Yes, significantly"). If there is only one category of Christianity in a country, and a specific situation concerns this

category of Christianity (e.g. converts from Islam in Somalia), the answer is immediately 1/1 (= 1) and makes a sub-score of 4 points ("Yes, absolutely").

There could also be only two or three different categories of Christianity in a country. The respondent will then act according to the method mentioned above.

Example: For every question all four factors are important. See the following scoring grid. The yellow shading represents a fictitious example for Country X, using the question "Have burials of Christians been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites?"

	No	**Yes, somewhat or rarely**	**Yes, significantly**	**Yes, very significantly**	**Yes, absolutely**
	0 points	**1 point**	**2 points**	**3 points**	**4 points**
(1) Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution	None	up to 1/4	>1/4 - 2/4	>2/4 - 3/4	>3/4 - 1 *(all 3 categories of Christianity in the country are affected)*
(2) Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution	None	up to 25% *(mainly in the hard-core Sharia states)*	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
(3) Intensity of persecution	None	Low	Medium	High *(when it happens, the intensity is high; it is really difficult to find a way out of that situation)*	very high
(4) Frequency of persecution	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent *(it happens frequently)*	permanent

For this example, the net result would be (4+1+3+3)/4=2.75. The explanation would be given in the comments column added to the question.

Please note that more information on all explanations above can be found above in the main body of this WWL Methodology document. The document can also be accessed on the Open Doors Analytical website at: http://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/; password freedom).

Due to the complexity of the scoring grid, we strongly advise you to only use the online version of the questionnaire (if at all possible) which does the calculations automatically for you.

1 Persecution engines

The WWL methodology distinguishes nine different persecution engines. The main identified persecution engines cover religious and cultural systems, inner-Christian conflicts, ideological systems, flaws of human nature driven by power or greed and are listed in that order. They can be pursued by the same drivers of persecution or appear as independent parallel phenomena. Therefore mark as many as you deem relevant. Please note that there is a final category "other" in case you can identify a different persecution engine. Please indicate which engines are active, and how strong they are (very weak to very strong, or not at all).

Which persecution engines were active in the country:	**Not at all**	**Very weak**	**Weak**	**Medium**	**Strong**	**Very Strong**	**Please provide information to clarify your answers**
Islamic oppression *Tries to bring the country or the world under the 'House of Islam' through violent and/or non-violent actions.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Religious nationalism *Tries to conquer the nation for one's religion. Mainly Hinduism and Buddhism, but also orthodox Judaism or other religions.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Clan oppression *Tries to enforce the continuing influence of age-old norms and values, or traditional belief systems, shaped in the context of the clan. This persecution engine does not refer to inter-ethnic conflict.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	

Ethno-religious hostility *Tries to subject another ethnic group to hostilities because that group has another religion. This persecution engine does not refer to oppression caused by conversion within the clan.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Christian Denominational protectionism *Tries to maintain one's Christian denomination as the only legitimate or dominant expression of Christianity in the country. In most cases this Christian denomination is the majority Christian denomination.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Communist and post-Communist oppression *Tries to maintain communism as a prescriptive ideology and/or controls the Church through a system of registration and oversight that has come from communism.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Secular intolerance *Tries to eradicate religion from the public domain, if possible even out of the hearts of people, and imposes an*	O	O	O	O	O	O	

atheistic form of secularism as a new governing ideology.							
Dictatorial paranoia *Does everything to maintain power, not particularly aiming to realize a specific vision.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Organized corruption and crime *Tries to create a climate of impunity, anarchy and corruption as a means for self-enrichment.*	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Other	O	O	O	O	O	O	

2 Drivers of persecution

It is important to realize which people or groups are driving the persecution engine(s) in the country. The WWL methodology distinguishes eleven different drivers. Here we seek to identify the people and groups who are driving discrimination, harassment or other forms of persecution of Christians. Please indicate which drivers are active, and how strong they are (very weak to very strong, or not at all).

	Not at all	Very weak	Weak	Medium	Strong	Very strong	Please provide information to clarify your answers
Have government officials at any level from local to national been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have ethnic group leaders been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	

Have religious leaders of other churches at any level from local to national been sources of persecution for (other) Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have fanatical movements been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have the citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Has one's own (extended) family been a source of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have political parties at any level from local to national been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have revolutionaries or paramilitary groups been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have organized crime cartels or networks been sources of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have multilateral organizations been sources of discrimination or other forms of persecution for Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Have there been other drivers of persecution? Please specify!	O	O	O	O	O	O	

3 Categories of Christians and churches persecuted

It is important to realize which categories of Christianity are present, and which of them are persecuted in the country. The WWL methodology distinguishes four different Categories of Christianity. Please indicate which categories are present, and if they are present also indicate how strong persecution of each category is (very weak to very strong, or not at all). Also provide details of the denominations you consider to belong to the different Categories of Christianity.

Categories of Christian communities	Present in the country	Persecution level						Please indicate which denominations you consider to come under this category in the country
		Not at all	Very weak	Weak	Medium	Strong	Very strong	
Communities of expatriate Christians. This category only applies when these communities are involuntarily isolated from other categories of Christianity.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Historical Christian communities.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Converts to Christianity from majority religion or ideology, traditional religion, mafia, etc. This can also refer to converts from other categories of Christianity. They might be absorbed by one of the other categories of churches but often gather in 'house' churches or 'underground' churches.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Non-traditional Christian communities (such as Evangelicals, Baptists, Pentecostals) and/or other Christian communities not included in the above three groups. Sometimes they also gather in 'house' churches or 'underground' churches.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

Block 1: Private life

Private life is defined as the inner life of a Christian, the *forum internum*, the freedom of thought and conscience.

The guiding question asked is: "How free has a Christian been to relate to God one-on-one in his/her own space?" This is not limited to the private home but can also apply to prison or a walk in the woods, etc. This is irrespective of who the agent challenging this freedom might be.

		No	Yes	Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (1-4)	Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1-4)	Intensity of persecution (1-4)	Frequency of persecution (1-4)	Unknown	N/A	Please provide information to clarify your answers
1.1	Has conversion been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.2	Has it been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.3	Has it been dangerous to privately own or	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	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.)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.5	Has it been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.6	Has it been risky for Christians to access Christian radio or TV, or Christian material on the Internet?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.7	Has it been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with *immediate* family members?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.8	Has it been risky for	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	Christians to speak about their faith with those *other than immediate* family (extended family, others)?									
1.9	Has it been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
1.10	Have Christians been isolated from other family members or other like-minded Christians (e.g. house arrest)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

Block 2: Family life

Family life is defined as pertaining to the nuclear and extended family of a Christian.

The guiding 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?" It also asks: "How much have Christians been discriminated against, harassed or in any other way persecuted by their own families?"

		No	Yes	Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (1-4)	Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1-4)	Intensity of persecution (1-4)	Frequency of persecution (1-4)	Unknown	N/A	Please provide information to clarify your answers
2.1	Have babies and children of Christians automatically been registered under the state or majority religion?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.2	Has registering the birth, wedding, death, etc. of Christians been hindered or made impossible?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.3	Have Christians been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.4	Have Christian baptisms been hindered?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.5	Have burials of Christians been hindered or coercively performed with non-	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	Christian rites?									
2.6	Have Christian couples been hindered in adopting children or serving as foster parents because of their faith?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.7	Have parents been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.8	Have Christian children been pressured to attend anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.9	Have children of Christians been harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' faith?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

2.10	Have Christian spouses and/or children of Christians been subject to separation for prolonged periods of time by circumstances relating to persecution?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.11	Have spouses of converts been put under pressure (successfully or unsuccessfully) by others to divorce?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
2.12	Have Christian spouses of non-Christians been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

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?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

Block 3: Community life

Community life is defined as the interaction of Christians with their respective local communities beyond the family level and below any supra-local level. (Supra-local means above the local level.) This community life includes the workplace, business, health care, education, and local public life and civic order. A mobile person can have several local communities regarding different aspects of community life, e.g. origin or residence in one place and education or work in another.

The guiding question asked is: "How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live out 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?"

		No	**Yes**	**Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (1-4)**	**Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1-4)**	**Intensity of persecution (1-4)**	**Frequency of persecution (1-4)**	**Unknown**	**N / A**	**Please provide information to clarify your answers**
3.1	Have Christians been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	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.)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.3	Have Christians been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.4	Have Christians been hindered in sharing community resources	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	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?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.6	Have Christians been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.7	Have Christians been pressured by their community to renounce their faith?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.8	Have Christians had less access to health care because of their faith?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.9	Have Christians faced	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	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?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
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)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
3.12	Have Christians been fined for faith-related reasons (e.g. jizya tax, community	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	tax, protection money)?									
3.13	Have Christians been interrogated or compelled to report to the local vigilante/police for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

Block 4: National life

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.

The guiding 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 national life put on Christians by acts of misinformation, discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?"

		No	**Yes**	**Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (1-4)**	**Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1-4)**	**Intensity of persecution (1-4)**	**Frequency of persecution (1-4)**	**Unknown**	**N/A**	**Please provide information to clarify your answers**
4.1	Does the Constitution or basic national or state law limit freedom of religion as formulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	Rights? Please note it may well be that there are contradictions in laws.									
4.2	Have officials at any level refused to recognise an individual's conversion as recorded in government administration systems, identity cards, etc.?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
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?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.4	Have Christians been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.5	Have Christians been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	faith-related reasons?									
4.6	Have Christians been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.7	Have Christians been hindered in running their own businesses without interference for faith-related reasons (e.g. personnel policy, client admission policy)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.8	Have Christians been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.9	Have Christian civil society organizations or political parties been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.10	Has media reporting been incorrect	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	or biased against Christians?									
4.11	Have Christians been subject to smear campaigns or hate speech?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.12	Have Christians, churches or Christian organizations been hindered in publicly displaying religious symbols?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.13	Have Christians been accused of blasphemy or insulting the majority religion, either by state authorities or by pressure groups?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.14	Have those who caused harm to Christians deliberately been left unpunished?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.15	Have Christians accused in court been deprived of equal treatment?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
4.16	Has international monitoring been hindered when	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	Christians had to stand trial?									

Block 5: Church life

Church life is defined as the collective exercise by Christians of freedom of thought and conscience, particularly with regards to uniting with fellow Christians in worship, life, service and public expression of their faith without undue interference. It also pertains to properties held or used by Christians for these purposes.

The guiding 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?"

Please note that "churches" also refers to 'house' churches or 'underground' churches.

		No	Yes	Proportion of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (1-4)	Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1-4)	Intensity of persecution (1-4)	Frequency of persecution (1-4)	Unknown	N/A	Please provide information to clarify your answers
5.1	Have activities of churches been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.2	Has it been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.3	Have Christian communities been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier?									
5.4	Have churches been hindered from organizing Christian activities *inside* their place of worship?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.5	Have churches been hindered from organizing Christian activities *outside* church buildings?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.6	Has work among youth in particular been restricted?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.7	Have churches been hindered from openly integrating converts?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.8	Have Christian preaching, teaching and/or published materials been monitored?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.9	Have Christians experienced interference when choosing their own	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	religious leaders?									
5.10	Have Christians been hindered in training their own religious leaders?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.11	Have pastors or other Christian leaders, or their family members, been special targets of harassment for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.12	Have churches or Christian organizations been hindered in printing Christian materials or owning printing presses?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.13	Have churches been hindered in importing Christian materials from abroad?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.14	Has openly selling or distributing Bibles and other Christian materials been hindered?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.15	Have Bibles and other religious materials held by churches	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	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)?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.17	Have churches, Christian organizations or institutions been hindered in expressing or putting into practice their convictions on marital and family arrangements?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.18	Have churches been hindered in establishing, managing, maintaining and conducting schools, or charitable, humanitarian, medical, social or cultural organizations, institutions	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

	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.)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
5.20	Has it been risky for churches or Christian organizations to speak out against instigators of persecution?	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	

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).

The guiding question asked is: "How many cases of such violence have there been?"

		Number of verified cases:	**Score based on verified cases:**	**Number of estimated cases:**		**Please provide information to clarify your answers**
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	O	O	O	*NB: Every martyr up to ten weighs 3 points. Thus ten or more martyrs make **30 points**.*	

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?	O	O	O	*NB: Every incident up to ten weighs 3 points. Thus ten or more buildings make **30 points**.*	

		More than 10 cases (3 points)	**2-9 cases (2 points)**	**1 case (1 point)**	**No (0 points)**	**Unknown**	**Please provide information to clarify your answers**
6.3	How many Christians have been detained without trial for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	
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?	O	O	O	O	O	
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	
6.6	How many Christians have	O	O	O	O	O	

	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?	O	O	O	O	O	
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death-threats)?	O	O	O	O	O	
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?	O	O	O	O	O	
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?	O	O	O	O	O	
6.11	How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for	O	O	O	O	O	

	faith-related reasons?						
6.12	How many Christians have been forced to leave their country for faith-related reasons?	O	O	O	O	O	

BLOCK 7: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (not included in scores but meant for additional information)

7.1 As to changes that you are observing in this country

	Worsening rapidly	**Worsening**	**No change**	**Worsened in some parts, but improved in others**	**Improving**	**Improving rapidly**	**Please clarify your answer**
In which direction have changes occurred in this country regarding the treatment of Christians and/or the churches, compared to the previous year?	O	O	O	O	O	O	

7.2 As to the growth of the Church

	Growing rapidly	**Growing slowly**	**No signify-cant change**	**Growth in some parts, decrease in others**	**Shrinking slowly**	**Shrinking rapidly**	**Please clarify your answer**
How would you describe the growth of the Church in this country over the past 12 months?	O	O	O	O	O	O	

7.3 As to the numbers of Christians killed for their faith

	More killed	Less killed	No significant change	Please clarify your answer
How would you summarise changes to the number of Christians killed in the country, compared to the previous year?	O	O	O	

7.4 As to the imprisonment of Christians

	More imprisoned	Less imprisoned	No significant change	Please clarify your answer
How would you summarise changes to the number of imprisoned Christians in the country, compared to the previous year?	O	O	O	

7.5 As to the level of fear among Christians

	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low	Please clarify your answer
How would you describe the level of fear among Christians in this country?	O	O	O	O	O	

7.6 As to the evolution of the level of fear among Christians

	Growing rapidly	Growing slowly	No change	Shrinking slowly	Shrinking rapidly	Please clarify your answer
How would you describe the evolution in the level of fear among	O	O	O	O	O	

Christians in this country over the past 12 months?						

7.7 To which forms of persecution are men and boys particularly subject?
Please give your thoughts!

7.8 To which forms of persecution are women and girls particularly subject?
Please give your thoughts!

7.9 Are there any laws or accepted practices in your context which make Christian women and girls more vulnerable to persecution?
Please give your thoughts!

7.10 Are there ways in which the persecution of men and boys particularly affects Christian families and communities?
Please give your thoughts!

7.11 Are there ways in which the persecution of women and girls particularly affects Christian families and communities?
Please give your thoughts!

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?
Please give your thoughts!

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?
Please give your thoughts!

7.14 Do you have any detailed information on non-Christian religious minorities in the country who have been marginalised or persecuted? Which other groups in the country have been persecuted on the same level or even harder than Christians?
Please give your thoughts!

7.15 What have been the most important general changes in the country?

The structure of your answer could follow these questions:

- 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 **legal** 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 **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?

7.16 Room for further comments: *This is the place to leave comments if you did not have enough space for them elsewhere in the questionnaire. If possible, please provide the appropriate question number your comment belongs to. However, this space can also be used to provide information that you found difficult to place anywhere else in the questionnaire.*

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 country staff, contacts 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.[23] 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 Christianity 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;

[23] 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.

- 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.

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. In order 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 October to 30 September. 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 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. In order 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:

FINAL BLOCK 6 SCORE = Number of points / Maximum possible number of points for block x 100 / 6 = 10 / 90 x 100 / 6 = 1.852.

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 2020 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:
Final table of scores for WWL 2025

The tables below include all countries scoring 41 points or more in WWL 2025 analysis. These are the countries where Christians face high (41-60 points), very high (61-80 points) or extremely high (81-100 points) levels of persecution. The columns on the far right give a comparison to the scores and ranks in WWL 2024.

a) WWL 2025 / Countries scoring 81 – 100 points

WWL 2025 Rank	Country	1. Private Life Score	2. Family Life Score	3. Community Life Score	4. National Life Score	5. Church Life Score	6. Violence Score	Total WWL 2025 Score	WWL 2024 Rank	Total WWL 2024 Score
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	1	96
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.7	11.1	94	2	93
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.6	94	5	89
4	Libya	16.0	16.2	15.9	16.2	16.4	10.6	91	3	91
5	Sudan	14.1	14.2	15.5	14.9	15.3	16.1	90	8	87
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.9	12.2	89	4	89
7	Nigeria	13.5	13.9	14.6	14.9	14.5	16.7	88	6	88
8	Pakistan	13.6	13.9	15.0	15.0	12.9	16.7	87	7	87
9	Iran	15.0	14.6	13.5	15.9	16.5	10.9	86	9	86
10	Afghanistan	15.6	15.9	15.9	16.4	16.7	5.0	85	10	84
11	India	12.2	12.9	13.3	14.9	13.9	16.5	84	11	83
12	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.8	15.8	16.6	3.3	81	13	81
13	Myanmar	12.6	11.1	13.5	14.1	12.9	16.5	81	17	79

b) WWL 2025 / Countries scoring 61 – 80 points

WWL 2025 Rank	Country	1. Private Life Score	2. Family Life Score	3. Community Life Score	4. National Life Score	5. Church Life Score	6. Violence Score	Total WWL 2025 Score	WWL 2024 Rank	Total WWL 2024 Score
14	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	13.0	15.2	15.6	80	14	79
15	China	13.2	10.1	12.8	14.6	16.1	11.1	78	19	78
16	Maldives	15.6	15.3	13.7	15.8	16.5	0.7	78	18	78
17	Iraq	14.2	14.4	14.3	14.8	13.9	6.1	78	16	79
18	Syria	13.5	14.4	13.9	14.4	14.3	7.0	78	12	81
19	Algeria	14.7	14.3	11.5	14.7	16.0	6.3	77	15	79
20	Burkina Faso	11.7	9.7	13.2	11.5	14.0	15.6	76	20	75
21	Morocco	13.2	13.8	11.6	12.9	14.3	8.3	74	24	71
22	Laos	11.8	10.7	13.5	14.1	13.9	9.8	74	21	75
23	Mauritania	14.6	14.2	13.8	14.2	14.2	2.8	74	23	72
24	Bangladesh	12.4	10.6	12.7	11.3	10.4	16.1	74	26	71
25	Uzbekistan	14.6	12.7	13.5	12.4	15.5	4.4	73	25	71
26	Cuba	13.2	8.5	13.9	13.3	15.1	9.1	73	22	73
27	Central African Republic	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	14.0	15.6	72	28	70
28	Niger	9.4	9.6	14.5	7.7	14.6	15.7	72	27	70
29	Turkmenistan	14.3	12.3	13.6	13.9	15.3	1.5	71	29	70
30	Nicaragua	12.4	7.6	13.7	13.3	14.1	9.6	71	30	70
31	Mexico	11.7	9.0	12.5	11.8	11.0	14.6	71	37	68
32	Oman	14.5	14.1	10.9	13.8	14.1	3.0	70	31	69
33	Ethiopia	9.9	9.7	12.6	10.4	12.1	15.6	70	32	69
34	Tunisia	12.4	13.2	10.1	12.6	13.8	8.1	70	33	69
35	Congo DR (DRC)	8.0	7.9	12.6	10.8	14.5	16.1	70	41	67
36	Bhutan	13.2	13.2	12.3	14.1	14.2	2.2	69	36	68
37	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.9	68	39	68
38	Kazakhstan	13.3	11.6	12.2	12.8	14.2	4.3	68	47	65
39	Tajikistan	14.1	12.7	12.7	13.2	13.7	1.9	68	46	66
40	Egypt	12.7	13.7	12.1	12.4	10.9	6.3	68	38	68
41	Qatar	14.2	14.2	10.5	13.2	14.4	0.7	67	40	67
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	2.6	67	45	66
43	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	8.4	13.1	16.1	67	43	66
44	Vietnam	10.8	9.5	12.2	14.1	14.1	5.9	67	35	68
45	Turkey	13.0	11.7	11.7	13.2	11.5	5.4	67	50	64
46	Colombia	11.0	7.9	12.7	11.5	10.5	12.6	66	34	68
47	Kyrgyzstan	13.5	10.3	11.7	11.4	12.4	6.9	66	61	59
48	Brunei	14.8	14.8	10.8	10.8	14.0	0.6	66	44	66
49	Chad	11.0	8.2	10.2	9.9	10.3	15.9	65	56	61
50	Jordan	12.9	14.3	10.4	12.2	12.8	2.4	65	48	65
51	Malaysia	12.8	13.7	11.7	12.4	11.2	3.0	65	49	64
52	Azerbaijan	13.3	10.2	9.6	12.2	13.7	5.6	65	59	60
53	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.9	64	51	63
54	Nepal	12.2	10.6	9.5	12.6	12.3	5.9	63	53	62
55	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.4	63	52	62
56	Russian Federation	12.7	7.9	10.7	13.1	14.1	4.4	63	62	58
57	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.1	1.7	61	55	61
58	Kuwait	13.1	13.6	9.4	12.0	12.2	0.9	61	54	61
59	Indonesia	10.9	11.9	10.9	11.6	10.2	5.7	61	42	66
60	United Arab Emirates	13.3	13.4	9.5	11.3	12.8	0.6	61	57	61

c) WWL 2025 / Countries scoring 41 – 60 points

WWL 2025 Rank	Country	1. Private Life Score	2. Family Life Score	3. Community Life Score	4. National Life Score	5. Church Life Score	6. Violence Score	Total WWL 2025 Score	WWL 2024 Rank	Total WWL 2024 Score
61	Sri Lanka	12.7	8.7	11.5	11.5	8.5	7.6	**60**	**58**	**60**
62	Palestinian Territories	13.1	13.3	10.3	10.7	12.1	0.2	**60**	**60**	**60**
63	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	14.6	**59**	**64**	**57**
64	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	12.1	9.4	**58**	**63**	**58**
65	Honduras	7.9	4.7	11.7	7.3	9.9	13.1	**55**	**66**	**55**
66	Togo	9.2	6.7	10.4	7.1	11.5	9.3	**54**	**68**	**52**
67	Bahrain	12.0	13.2	8.6	11.3	8.5	0.6	**54**	**65**	**55**
68	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	8.9	**54**	**69**	**52**
69	Ukraine	6.8	5.0	7.8	12.5	13.5	7.2	**53**	**77**	**44**
70	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	8.3	**53**	**71**	**52**
71	Venezuela	6.3	4.4	11.1	10.0	10.8	9.6	**52**	**67**	**53**
72	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	8.8	16.1	**52**	**70**	**52**
73	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	9.6	**51**	**76**	**44**
74	Lebanon	11.5	10.1	7.0	6.2	6.7	7.2	**49**	**72**	**48**
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	4.4	**48**	**73**	**47**
76	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	8.1	15.6	**47**	**74**	**46**
77	Belarus	9.9	3.7	5.0	10.8	14.1	3.1	**47**	**75**	**46**
78	Philippines	9.2	6.6	6.6	6.1	5.7	8.5	**43**	**79**	**40**

Appendix 4:
Glossary of definitions and terms used in WWL methodology

Christian	Anyone who self-identifies as a Christian and/or someone belonging to a Christian community as defined by the church's historic creeds. See Section 1.1.
Confidence rating	This attempts to measure the combined quality (and hence reliability) of information received back from Open Doors' field staff and external experts via questionnaires and other sources. See Section 6.
Double vulnerability	Double vulnerability refers to situations in which all citizens face challenges, but in which people of a specific religious minority (e.g. Christians) find themselves particularly targeted.
Field-stream questionnaire	Questionnaires which have been filled out by country researchers, after input from their network of field contributors.
Gender-specific religious persecution	Abbreviated to GSRP. The intersection of religious vulnerabilities with pervasive, destructive forms of gender inequality and violence.
Global Country Scan	This enables WWR to get a quick idea of the situation in almost all countries of the world and provides justification for further research. See Section 2.2.
Persecution	Any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians. See Section 1.1.
Persecution drivers	These are drivers of persecution engines and are people and/or groups embodying the exclusivist, exploitative and secularist impulses in society. See Section 1.2.5.
Persecution dynamics	The various factors in a country causing the persecution of Christians.
Persecution eclipse	Public awareness of a particular form of persecution is made minimal through the concurrent existence of political, social, economic, ethnic and/or other conflicts.

Persecution engines	Distinct situations that act as vehicles for the different elementary human impulses to achieve exclusive, absolute power, in the process committing persecution. See Section 1.2.4.
Power dynamic	The term power dynamic is normally used to represent a worldview that has a claim of superiority over other worldviews. Where pluralism is not tolerated, the drivers of the power dynamic will strive for absolute submission of society to their worldview.
Scoring grid	Developed with one column for 'No' and four columns for the different categories of 'Yes' in order to take into account the diverse character of persecution evident in countries. See Section 3.1.1.
Smash	Violence against Christians. See Section 1.3.
Spheres of life	WWL methodology has defined 5 areas of daily life for documenting and scoring the pressure experienced by Christians in a given country: Private life, family life, community life, national life and church life. See Section 1.4.
Squeeze	Pressure on Christians. See Section 1.3.
Variable Answer Element (VAE)	WWL methodology has defined five variables (VAEs) that are important to understand the spread and degree of persecution in the country: i) The number of categories of Christianity affected by persecution (1.5.1); ii) The proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution (1.5.2); iii) The intensity of persecution (1.5.3); iv) The frequency of persecution (1.5.4); and v) The gender-specific indication (1.5.5). Only the first four VAEs are currently employed for scoring.
WWL	The World Watch List is an index of all countries scoring 41 points or more in a given reporting period, i.e. all countries where Christians experience high, very high or extreme levels of persecution. Since the published table of Top 50 countries usually starts where countries score somewhere between 41-60 points, an annual list of so-called Persecution Watch Countries is also published to cover those countries scoring 50 points or more but not enough to be included in the Top 50.
WWR	World Watch Research is a team of analysts focusing on the persecution of Christians around the world, funded by Open Doors International.