

FRONT-LINE FAITH

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION UPDATE 2027

A global prayer guide to deepen your fellowship with Christians in the most difficult and dangerous places to follow Christ

The Voice of the Martyrs

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 1 8/11/26 8:18 AM





"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body."

Hebrews 13:3









© 2027 The Voice of the Martyrs

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

CPC26001

Using Your Global Prayer Guide

Front-Line Faith (a global prayer guide) is designed to help you pray more specifically for our brothers and sisters in Christ who risk rejection, imprisonment, violent attacks and even death as they worship God and faithfully bear witness to Christ.

The Lord has given us the amazing privilege of helping advance his kingdom through prayer. Thank you for choosing to serve and fellowship with our persecuted brothers and sisters in this way!

- **HOSTILE AREAS:** Areas or countries where extremist groups, family members or community members routinely persecute Christians for their faith and witness.
- **RESTRICTED NATIONS:** Nations where governments oppose Christian faith and witness to varying degrees of severity. Christians are also persecuted by extremist groups, family members or community members.
- **MONITORED NATIONS:** Areas closely monitored because of increased persecution. The frequency and severity of persecution do not currently meet the criteria of the Hostile category. (See p. 109 for the list and descriptions of monitored nations.)
- **VOM WORK:** VOM work is tailored to the needs and available resources in each nation. We serve our persecuted Christian family members in several ways:

  1. **Persecution Response** — When VOM's field leaders receive a report of a Christian being persecuted for his or her witness, we respond with encouragement and material assistance.
  2. **A Bible for Every Believer** — VOM is committed to ensuring that every believer in a hostile area or restricted nation has a personal copy of the Bible, God's Word.
  3. **Front-Line Ministry** — VOM equips evangelists and pastors to advance God's kingdom in hostile areas and restricted nations, some of the world's most difficult and dangerous mission fields.
  4. **Fellowship and Inspiration** — VOM undertakes projects to foster prayer for and with persecuted Christians and loving fellowship among members of the global body of Christ.

Many details of our work are not shared for security reasons.

AFGHANISTAN

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: The good news of Christ reached Afghanistan by the second century, but today there are no church buildings. Cultural and religious opposition to the gospel as well as significant security issues remain great challenges for all missions efforts in this Central Asian nation. Most Afghans have never heard the gospel, do not know a Christian and have been indoctrinated to follow Muhammad's teachings without question. Radical Islam and violent tribal political activity make the nation a difficult and dangerous place for Christians to practice their faith. There is, nevertheless, a special unity among Christians laboring for the gospel in Afghanistan even amid the imposed isolation. Indigenous, near-culture and expatriate believers are boldly taking risks and using every possible opportunity to help believers grow in faith and connect with local house churches. While church growth has been slow among the more than 40 unique people groups, significant Christian growth has occurred among the Hazara people, and members of other people groups are also coming to know Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 99.8 percent of Afghans are Muslims, with 90 percent Sunni and 10 percent Shiite.

PERSECUTOR: Both local and national governments are highly antagonistic toward Christians. Extremist groups, including the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) and the Taliban, which has controlled the nation's government since 2021, are active, and believers are also persecuted by their families, friends and communities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN AFGHANISTAN: Afghan Christians cannot worship openly. They must worship in homes or other small venues, and evangelism is forbidden. Christians and seekers are highly secretive about their faith or interest in Christianity, especially since the resurgence of the Taliban. Beatings, torture and kidnappings are routine for Christians in Afghanistan. Although waves of Christians have fled the country to worship openly, some Afghan Christians have stayed to maintain a witness for Christ. A small number of Christians are martyred every year in Afghanistan, but their deaths generally occur without public knowledge. The number of believers in jail is rising. Christian converts from Islam are often killed by family members or other radicalized Muslims before any legal proceedings can begin.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Since there are no traditional church buildings or Christian bookstores in Afghanistan, Bibles are available only through underground ministry networks or in digital formats. There is little access to printed Bibles, and owning one is extremely dangerous. Most believers do not have their own Bible, but online Bibles and other digital formats are available and extremely helpful to believers and seekers. Bible translation efforts are underway for the languages of some people groups who do not have a Bible in their native language.

VOM WORK: VOM equips Afghan Christians by providing Bibles, TV and radio broadcasts, discipleship training, front-line worker support and other forms of practical and spiritual assistance. There is a special focus on helping Christians become self-supporting, including those who stayed in the country after the 2021 Taliban takeover and those who are deported back to the country after attempting to gain asylum in neighboring countries.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 4-5 8/11/26 8:18 AM

ALGERIA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Before the founding of Islam in the seventh century and the subsequent invasion by Arab Muslims, Algeria was inhabited by the Berber people. Today, they live mainly in Algeria's mountainous Kabylie area in the north, while Arabs inhabit the rest of the country. The Christian faith has a long history in North Africa, especially among ethnic Berbers. The early church father Augustine of Hippo is thought to have been a Berber from Algeria. After centuries of oppressive Muslim occupation, public Christian worship and witness have largely disappeared, but many Berbers are now rediscovering their Christian heritage. Churches have seen rapid growth, and Algeria has experienced one of the world's largest movements of Muslims coming to faith in Christ. Algerian Christians are reaching out boldly to their Muslim countrymen, causing increased persecution in an uncertain political climate.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 99 percent of Algerians are Sunni Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam are persecuted by the government and their own family members. They also face a variety of hardships from the local community.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN ALGERIA:
Algeria is a shining example of a persevering church in North Africa and is also a leader for theological training and church development in the region. Nearly all of the church growth has occurred within the Berber community. Although some churches are allowed to meet openly, in 2018 the government closed many church buildings and harassed congregations. Berber Christians, who are watched carefully, have gained a collective voice through an association of churches. Sharing the gospel with Arabs can cause serious problems, but Berber Christians continue to share the gospel boldly in and around al-Qaida terrorist camps. Secret communities of Arab Christians exist throughout the country. While it is not common for Christians to be imprisoned, one believer was imprisoned for nearly a year in connection with a social media post.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: There is a Bible society in Algeria, but the printing and importation of Bibles is carefully monitored, limited and controlled by the government. Bible distributions are risky for the distributors and congregations involved, and Bibles are often confiscated by government officials.

VOM WORK: VOM serves believers who are expelled from their homes. We print and distribute Bibles and literature, and support front-line workers who reach out to Muslims.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 6-7 8/11/26 8:18 AM

AZERBAIJAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Because Azerbaijan was formerly a Soviet republic, its churches developed only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Although Azerbaijan is rich in oil and gas reserves, corruption and the country's authoritarian government have impeded economic growth. Nevertheless, poverty has been reduced, and the country's infrastructure is gradually improving.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 85 percent of Azerbaijanis are Shiite Muslims, and 2 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Families are the main persecutors of Christians. Azerbaijan has a shame-honor culture in which those who leave Islam are considered to have brought shame on the family. The government also pressures Christians with heavy fines.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN AZERBAIJAN:
For many years now, churches have been denied the ability to register legally. Secret police attend and sometimes raid church meetings, which the government classifies as illegal. In 2015, the government published a list of banned religious books that included the Old Testament. Those caught with banned religious literature are fined. The government is tightening restrictions and often asks church leaders to submit lists of members' names. Some pastors and leaders feel this is an attempt to gather information for later use against church members or pastors. Many Christians faithfully share Christ with neighbors and family members despite legal pressure and possible fines.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are difficult to obtain. Churches can purchase them, but they cannot be printed legally.

VOM WORK: VOM brings Bibles, including children's Bibles, into the country and provides legal assistance to persecuted pastors and churches.

BAHRAIN

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: This small island nation is located in one of the world's chief oil-producing regions, but it has relatively small petroleum resources. Therefore, its economy has long relied on processing crude oil from neighboring countries. Bahrain has experienced significant religious, political and economic tension, resulting mainly from the Sunni-Shiite division among its Muslim populace and its involvement in the global economy. This unrest, coupled with the faithful Christian witness of indigenous Arabs and immigrant workers, has led to a season of openness and some response to the gospel among those indigenous to Bahrain.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Less than 1 percent of native Bahrainis are Christians; nearly all are Muslims. However, Christians among Bahrain's expatriate workers make up 8 percent of the population.

PERSECUTOR: Families and local communities are the main persecutors, but the government occasionally imprisons or harasses new Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN BAHRAIN:
Christian converts from Islam often lose their jobs and social status, and many are rejected by their families. However, some still gather to worship in secret.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bahrainis have limited access to the Bible through the internet and churches.

VOM WORK: VOM supports evangelists who work throughout the Arabian Peninsula. We distribute Bibles and other Christian literature, and we support and encourage new believers who suffer for their faith.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 8-9 8/11/26 8:18 AM

BANGLADESH



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Until the 21st century, Bangladesh was considered one of the poorest countries in the world. Though there are signs of economic growth, governmental instability continues. Churches are careful when offering relief to the poor and needy because they do not want to encourage false conversions among people claiming faith in Christ solely for economic benefit. While Bangladesh is a majority-Muslim nation with increasing extremism, a growing number among the majority are coming to faith in Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 88 percent of Bangladeshis are Sunni Muslims. Less than 1 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Local Muslim authorities, Islamic extremist groups, families and communities persecute Christians. Hindus persecute believers in the northwestern part of the country, and Buddhist (Chakma) extremists persecute believers in the southeastern Chittagong Hill Tracts.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN BANGLADESH: Many Christian groups meet publicly, while others worship in unregistered churches. When Muslims convert to Christianity, they are often forced to leave their community.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: The Bangladesh Bible Society and the missions community have made Bibles available in several languages, but those in rural areas and especially Muslim converts have difficulty finding and acquiring them.

VOM WORK: VOM serves those expelled from their communities and provides for the medical needs of those injured in persecution attacks. We support Bible distributions and provide for the training of evangelists, church planters and pastors.

A PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIANS IN LATIN AMERICA

Dear heavenly Father,

As Christians in the "red zones" of Colombia take great risks to follow you, may they be bold in the face of violent opposition by guerrillas and paramilitary groups, and may their ministry work go undetected by those who are hostile to your kingdom.

Likewise, in neighboring Venezuela, protect our persecuted Christian family members along the border with Colombia who are targeted in guerrilla attacks. We also pray for those who suffer at the hands of violent drug traffickers seeking to silence their witness for Christ.

As our brothers and sisters in Mexico face rejection from their families and communities, grant them the gift of belonging among the body of Christ. When they are targeted by armed Marxist rebels and narco-traffickers, we pray that your presence will bring them peace.

Give wisdom and courage to our persecuted Christian family in Nicaragua as they seek to honor and obey you amid an environment of increasing restrictions by a government opposed to the gospel.

Thank you for the fellowship we share with our brothers and sisters in Latin America.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 10-11 8/11/26 8:18 AM

BENIN



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Benin is a small country bordering western Nigeria. It is the birthplace of voodoo, and Christianity is viewed by many in the north as a threat to their traditional beliefs. Every village and many homes in the north have designated locations for the ritualistic killing of animals (and sometimes humans) in an attempt to appease demonic spirits. Voodoo is an official religion, and Voodoo Day (in January) is a public holiday. Witchcraft is deeply ingrained in the local culture and is openly practiced. Christianity is considered a foreign religion that steals a community's youth and prevents them from being properly initiated into the local tribes. Village chiefs often serve as both political leaders and voodooist religious leaders.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: About 30 percent of the Beninese are Christians. Nearly 40 percent practice ethnic religions, and another 30 percent are Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: Believers are persecuted by their family and community.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN BENIN: Persecution is prevalent in the north. New converts to Christianity are beaten and sometimes killed, while church buildings are routinely destroyed. Villages keep evangelists out and prevent construction of new churches.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available, but they are hard to find in rural areas.

VOM WORK: Most of VOM's work involves urgent persecution response, providing food, shelter and personal items for individuals who have been driven from their homes. We are also providing Bibles in a region where most people practice voodoo.

BHUTAN

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Until the 1980s, Bhutan was isolated from the rest of the world by its Himalayan geography, poor infrastructure and poor international relations. In 2008, the country adopted a multiparty constitutional democracy and implemented a new constitution that affords a greater level of religious freedom, but Christians still face many challenges. Most Christians in Bhutan are of Nepali heritage, and believers are focused on reaching the ethnic Bhutanese with the message of Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 88 percent of the Bhutanese people are Buddhists. Approximately 1 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are restricted by national laws and persecuted by local authorities. Hindu-background believers are also persecuted by their families and local communities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN BHUTAN: The king identifies himself as the defender of Buddhism, and the government works covertly to discourage the spread of Christianity, enacting an anti-conversion law punishable by imprisonment. Christians are viewed as followers of a foreign, Western religion. There is no opportunity for the legal registration of churches in Bhutan. Christians often lose their jobs and are unable to find work because of their faith. They can lose their citizenship and privileges for being Christian, so many must worship in secret.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Though small numbers of Bibles are allowed into the nation legally, the government continues to restrict widespread distribution. Most Bibles must be smuggled into the country from neighboring nations.



VOM WORK: VOM provides Bibles and discipleship resources. We are also supporting the training and discipleship of future local church leaders.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 12-13 8/11/26 8:18 AM

BRUNEI



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Brunei is a Muslim-majority nation under the rule of a dynastic sultan and Islamic law. There are fewer than 20 registered churches in Brunei and few opportunities for Bruneians to hear the gospel. While oil wealth has ensured that few people lack in material needs, spiritual needs are great. Despite the risks, a few bold evangelists and missionaries continue to bring the light of the gospel to this dark land.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Almost 80 percent of Bruneians are Sunni Muslims, and nearly all of the 9 percent who are Christians are ethnically Chinese.

PERSECUTOR: The government is the main persecutor of Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN BRUNEI: While some historic churches exist in Brunei, no new church buildings are allowed. Churches are often afraid to reach out to Muslims because they are monitored closely by the religious police. Even inviting a Muslim to a Christmas celebration would be problematic. The penalty for evangelizing Muslims is a $15,000 fine, up to five years in prison or both. Nevertheless, several Bruneians have been baptized.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles in Malay, the country's official language, are illegal and are confiscated if discovered. No bookstores in Brunei sell Bibles.

VOM WORK: VOM supports the work of evangelists throughout the country.

BURKINA FASO



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Burkina Faso has seen a sharp rise in Islamist activity since 2016. Militants linked to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) and al-Qaida have crossed porous borders in the north to broaden their influence in the Sahel region. Christians have been a primary target of the Islamists' campaign since April 2019, when approximately 70 Christians were killed and five churches were attacked. More than 1,300 churches have reportedly closed in northern and eastern Burkina Faso because of security issues and threat of attack. Islamist activity also has increased in the southwestern part of the country, with more attacks on churches and the murder of several pastors. More than 200,000 Christians have been driven from their homes as a result of violence and threats against Christians throughout the country. More than 2 million people in total have been displaced by the conflict, adding to an already strained economy amid political uncertainty.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Just over half of Burkinabe are Muslims. Approximately 21 percent are Christian.

PERSECUTOR: The main persecutors are Islamists linked to al-Qaida and ISIS terrorist groups.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN BURKINA FASO: Large churches operate openly in the capital, and until recently even Christians living among Muslims in some villages had freedom to practice their faith. However, attacks against Christians have increased dramatically in recent years, and today, few Christians remain in the northern and southwestern parts of the country.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles in French and the Mooré language are readily available in the capital, but few Bibles are available in minority languages. Distribution is difficult because of security issues in the countryside. The literacy rate is less than 35 percent nationwide.

VOM WORK: VOM is supporting the families of pastors martyred by terrorist groups linked to al-Qaida and ISIS. VOM is also providing aid to numerous displaced Christians who have fled recurring attacks in the northern part of the country.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 14-15 8/11/26 8:18 AM

CAMEROON



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Boko Haram raids on Christian-majority villages along the northwestern border with Nigeria have specifically targeted churches and Christian activity. In a typical attack, Christians are killed or displaced, churches are burned and homes are destroyed. Several Christian villages have been abandoned completely after recurring attacks, which have included killings, kidnappings, and the burning of houses, schools and churches.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Cameroon is a majority-Christian country, including 52 percent Christians and 24 percent Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: The main persecutor is the Boko Haram Islamic terrorist group, and new Christians from a Muslim background are also persecuted by family and community members.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN CAMEROON: Most of Cameroon has a thriving Christian presence and many churches. But Christians living along the Nigerian border have experienced repeated, brutal attacks by Boko Haram. In these villages 50 to 80 miles from the border, men, women and children are attacked for being known as Christians.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are generally available, but distributing them in the north is challenging because of Islamist activity. Many people cannot afford a Bible and would prefer the Scriptures in a local language rather than French or English. Bible translation ministries have done significant work translating the Bible into local languages, such as the local Fulani dialect.

VOM WORK: VOM is helping restore persecuted Christians to spiritual wellness through relief and ministry efforts among the displaced in northern Cameroon, where many have fled their villages because of attacks by Boko Haram. VOM also supports pastors and evangelists who are ministering in areas targeted by Boko Haram.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Christians have suffered greatly from the conflict that began in December 2012, when several Muslim groups — primarily fighters from the Chad and western Sudan border region — formed a coalition called Seleka. The coalition marched on the capital, raiding and looting predominantly Christian villages along the way. Though Seleka was short-lived, being disbanded in September 2013, ex-Seleka militants spread throughout the country, forming splinter militias and often maintaining an Islamist agenda. Christians have been among the most vulnerable in the country's conflict, at times being driven from their homes and villages as attackers loot and destroy their homes and churches. In one town, 58,000 Christians who had been displaced by repeated attacks since 2012 were still living in refugee camps, and all churches within a 60-mile radius of the town had been destroyed. Those who wander outside the town to tend their farms — their only livelihood — have been at significant risk of attack. Churches are often the only ones caring for the hundreds of thousands who have been displaced in the conflict. While the CAR's conflict has presented opportunities for Christians to display Christ's love to a ravaged nation, indigenous churches need support from the larger body of Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 70 percent of the population identifies as Christian. The remainder of the populace are predominantly Sunni Muslims, though many who name themselves either Muslim or Christian continue to practice animistic tribal beliefs.

PERSECUTOR: Christians who actively share their faith suffer intense violence at the hands of Muslim rebels.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Because of the conflict between rebel groups that publicly identify themselves as either "Muslim" or "Christian," some have struggled to distinguish between political violence and religious persecution. However, attacks targeting churches, Christian families and

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 16-17 8/11/26 8:18 AM

pastors because of their Christian witness and other activities of biblical faith have become common.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are routinely destroyed by Islamist rebels. While they can be purchased in the capital, they are not accessible or affordable for most.

VOM WORK: VOM is serving Christians who have been driven from their homes and villages. We also distribute Bibles to believers who either cannot afford them or whose Bibles were destroyed in attacks.





A PRAYER

FOR CHRISTIANS IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Dear heavenly Father,

We ask that your Spirit will comfort and encourage our imprisoned brothers and sisters in Eritrea. In spite of their isolation, help them to know that they are not alone. May your people, the church, be a source of strength and provision for the families of those who are suffering in prison.

Lord, we lift to you the needs of displaced Christians in Sudan and South Sudan. May you provide for their every need. And for those in countries like Uganda and Ethiopia who face pressure and rejection from Muslim communities and family members, may they experience your peace and love.

Lastly, we ask for your protection for those suffering at the hands of Islamists in countries like Mozambique, Tanzania and Somalia. Help our Christian brothers and sisters to be bold witnesses in the face of Muslim extremism.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAD



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Chad is a country with two very different regions, ecologically and religiously. From the north to the center of the country, the land is mostly sandy desert with a population that is mostly Muslim. Toward the south, Chad has savannas and farmlands, with a population that is predominantly Christian. Thriving churches exist in southern Chad, but the central and northern regions of the country have few churches, and Christians gather for worship and fellowship at great risk. The word *Chad* means "large body of water" in a local language, and Lake Chad lies on the country's western borders with Nigeria and Niger. Islamic terrorist groups aligned with the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) and other groups such as Boko Haram are active in parts of the country, particularly in the Lake Chad basin.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 57 percent of Chadians are Muslim, 25 percent are Christian and 17 percent practice local tribal religions.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted by family and community members.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN CHAD: In Chad's southern region, Christians form the majority, and churches can operate openly and freely. But in Muslim-majority areas, few churches exist, and those who leave Islam to follow Christ face great danger. Family members and communities severely persecute Christian converts from Islam. Many have had their spouses and children taken from them, have been beaten and have been threatened. Some have been killed.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Christians in the south can purchase Bibles in the capital, N'Djamena, but they are expensive for most Chadians. In rural areas, Bibles are hard to find and unavailable in Muslim-majority regions.

VOM WORK: VOM is connecting with local ministries and churches to determine how to serve persecuted Christians in Chad.

CHINA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Revival and rapid church growth have characterized China's churches since the 1990s. About 130 million Chinese are Christians, most of whom worship within the house church movement. Millions of others worship with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), which, as the only legal church, is controlled by the Communist government. Despite continuous pressure and oppression from the Communist government, house church leaders refuse to compromise the gospel by joining government-controlled churches. Because of decades of government oppression, the Communist government is making it increasingly difficult for Chinese Christians to access Bibles or discipleship literature.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Influenced by their atheistic government, many Chinese are nonreligious. About 20 percent are Buddhists, and another 20 percent practice Chinese folk religion. 9 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The main persecutor is the government.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN CHINA: In the early 2000s, many unregistered churches enjoyed some freedom from government intrusion and harassment despite their illegal status. However, in recent years, restrictive religious regulations and persecution have increased significantly. Hundreds of churches have been forced to close, pastors and church members have been arrested or detained and the online sale of Bibles has been prohibited. The government has installed hundreds of millions of facial recognition cameras, many in or near churches, to identify those who attend worship services. Church leaders are under intense pressure to join the government-controlled TSPM. It is illegal to disciple anyone younger than 18. Christians are often charged with participating in cults or with other spurious accusations, such as "bad business practices" or "intent to undermine the state."

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Those living in rural areas have little access to Bibles and usually cannot afford them even when they are available.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 20-21 8/11/26 8:18 AM

China continued

Bibles can be purchased at some bookstores operated by the TSPM, but rarely in significant numbers. The Bibles that VOM and other frontier missions organizations distribute each year have only begun to meet the massive need. The shortage comes from a combination of factors: declaring most Bibles to be illegal and limiting distribution — both tactics of the Chinese Communist Party.

VOM WORK: VOM distributes Bibles in the least-reached, most-challenging areas of China. Government restrictions have caused a lack of supply and resulting high costs. We also support groups reaching out to Muslims in China and assist imprisoned pastors, church leaders and their families.



COLOMBIA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Many Christians in Colombia are taking great risks to share the gospel in some of the most dangerous places for Christians on earth. Working in these hostile areas often results in persecution from armed guerrillas and paramilitary forces. After voters rejected a 2016 peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a Marxist rebel group, the government approved an agreement with the insurgents without public approval in 2017. Since the agreement, various paramilitary groups in rural areas of the north and west have grown more active and violent.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 94 percent of Colombians are Christians. The vast majority are Roman Catholic.

PERSECUTOR: Marxist (atheistic communist) guerrillas and paramilitary groups violently persecute Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN COLOMBIA:
Pastors in Colombia's "red zones" (areas controlled by militant groups rather than the government) have not benefited significantly from the government's 2017 peace treaty with the Marxist guerrillas. While the guerrillas no longer officially affiliate with the FARC, they continue to oppress Christians and remain involved in the drug trade. Christians are targeted because their obedience to God's Word prevents them from supporting or joining the violent factions (guerrillas or paramilitary groups) funded through narcotics trafficking and other criminal activities. Worship, evangelism and travel are dangerous in these areas, as the guerrillas seek to control all aspects of villagers' lives.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in the cities, but remote and difficult terrain, poor security and lack of transportation make it dangerous and difficult for Christians in red zones to obtain Bibles.

VOM WORK: VOM provides ministry tools to front-line workers and responds to violent persecution in the red zones, where we also distribute many Bibles to believers.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 22-23 8/11/26 8:18 AM

COMOROS



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Comoros is among the poorest nations in the world, with fewer than 1 million people and few economic and educational opportunities. Comorians have no religious freedom, and leaving Islam is illegal. Sharing the gospel and discipling new believers are also highly restricted and can lead to expulsion for foreigners and brief imprisonments for locals. The strongest deterrent to becoming a Christian is societal pressure. Those who leave Islam to follow Christ are usually ostracized by their family and community. Some Christian organizations are allowed to operate, but they are strictly monitored and restricted to humanitarian projects. Despite these challenges, the gospel continues to spread inside the country.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Over 97 percent of Comorians are Muslim, and less than 2 percent are Christian.

PERSECUTOR: Anyone who leaves Islam is persecuted by family members and also risks possible persecution by the government.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN COMOROS: Believers must meet in small groups and can share their faith only through one-on-one relationships. When they gather to read their Bibles or speak about their faith, they risk persecution from the community as well as imprisonment by the government. For example, when five believers hosted a Christian debate in a private residence, they were imprisoned upon their discovery. Prison terms are generally short, and treatment of Christians is usually left to the discretion of local village leaders.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Translating the Bible into the native languages has been slow and difficult, with only portions of the Scripture available after more than a decade of work. Most Comorian believers have digital versions of these translated portions on their smartphones.

VOM WORK: VOM helps equip believers to share the gospel.

CUBA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Despite the change in leadership in 2018, churches in Cuba face unrelenting pressure from the government, which remains committed to communism's atheistic ideology and views churches as a threat to the revolution begun by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in the 1950s. Cubans are poor, and the government seeks to control every aspect of their lives. In April 2021, Miguel Diaz-Canel was announced as Raul Castro's successor as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party — the first time the country has been governed by someone other than a Castro since the revolution.

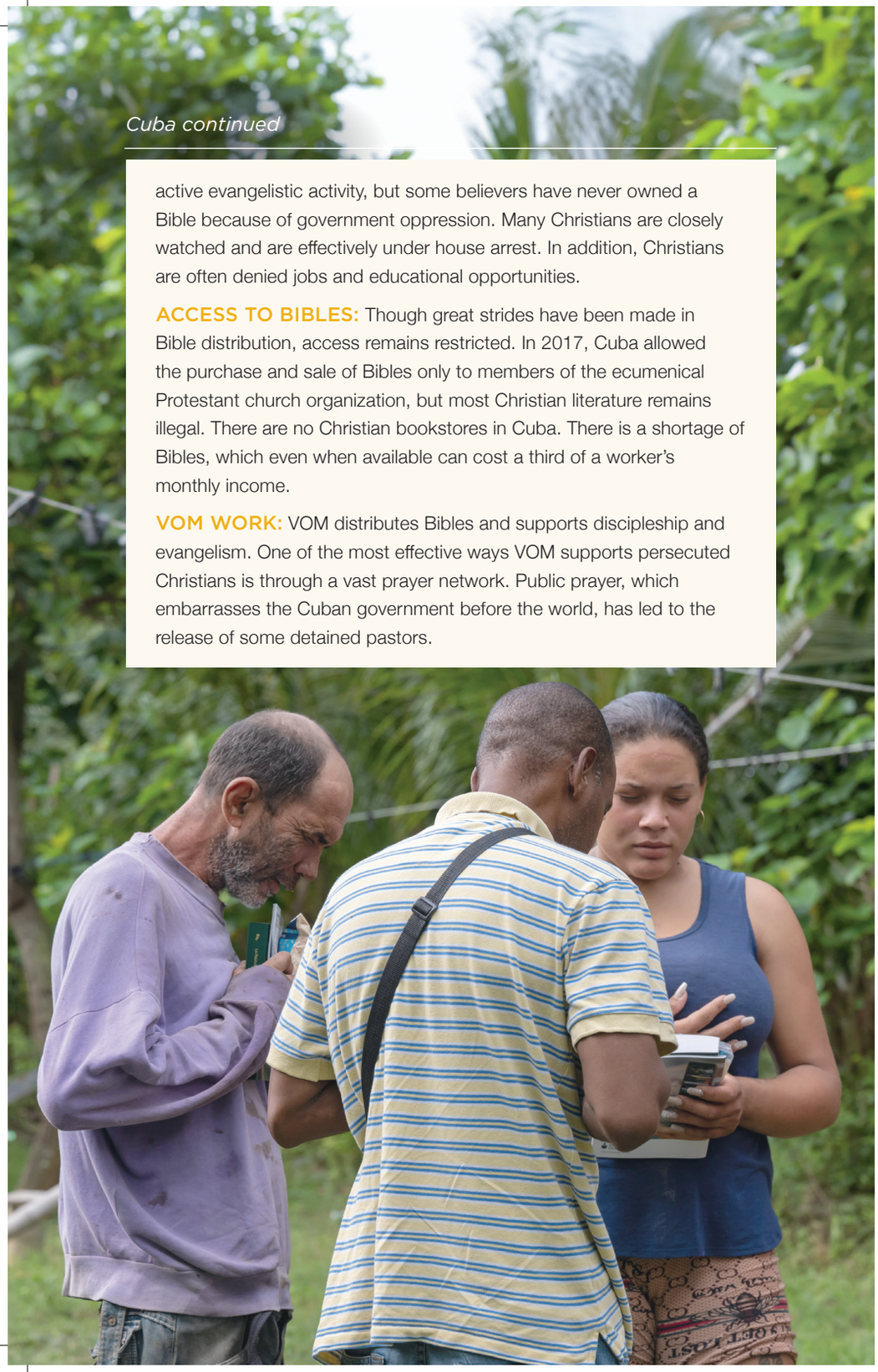
MAJOR RELIGIONS: While 56 percent of Cubans are Christians, most of the remaining percentage are atheists. A significant number of Cubans engage in superstitious and spiritist practices, including the Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria.

PERSECUTOR: The government persecutes Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN CUBA: Unlike the overt violence Christians faced during the Communist Cuban Revolution, more subtle methods of persecution are now used by the Cuban government, largely out of concern for its global reputation. Christian leaders are often summoned by government officials for questioning or detained up to 48 hours to pressure them, and churches are demolished by hired gangs so the government can deny responsibility. Legal church buildings are seized, and no new church buildings have been legally built in the country since the revolution. Many believers meet in illegal house churches, often extensions of the pastor's home or shaded structures in the backyard of a family's home. Churches continue to grow through

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 24-25 8/11/26 8:18 AM



Cuba continued

active evangelistic activity, but some believers have never owned a Bible because of government oppression. Many Christians are closely watched and are effectively under house arrest. In addition, Christians are often denied jobs and educational opportunities.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Though great strides have been made in Bible distribution, access remains restricted. In 2017, Cuba allowed the purchase and sale of Bibles only to members of the ecumenical Protestant church organization, but most Christian literature remains illegal. There are no Christian bookstores in Cuba. There is a shortage of Bibles, which even when available can cost a third of a worker's monthly income.

VOM WORK: VOM distributes Bibles and supports discipleship and evangelism. One of the most effective ways VOM supports persecuted Christians is through a vast prayer network. Public prayer, which embarrasses the Cuban government before the world, has led to the release of some detained pastors.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: While the DRC is one of Africa's largest countries geographically with a Christian-majority population, Islamist terrorists severely persecute Christians along the DRC's eastern border. One of the principal persecutors is the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an affiliate of the Islamic State in the Central African Province (ISCAP). The ADF is active in the Rwenzori Mountain area and seeks to establish Islamic law throughout the region. When rebels capture groups of people, they often release Muslims while killing Christians who refuse to convert to Islam.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 90 percent are Christians, and 5 percent follow ethnic religions.

PERSECUTOR: Islamic extremists located in the east are the main persecutors.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE DRC:
Christians are under immense pressure in areas of the eastern DRC controlled by the ADF. In those regions, Christian villages have been raided, churches destroyed and hundreds of believers brutally killed. Dozens of local Christians have been abducted by the ADF and told to recant their faith in Christ and convert to Islam. Those abducted have witnessed horrific acts of violence against fellow Christians. Prior to the outbreak of violence, one church denomination had 25 churches in the Beni area; today, they have eight. Another denomination had 54 churches and now has 11. Other denominations report similar patterns.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in cities but not in rural areas. Children's Bibles and Bibles in Swahili are highly desired in the northeast.

VOM WORK: VOM supports widows and children of pastors and evangelists who were martyred as well as thousands of internally displaced believers who fled widespread Islamist attacks. We also distribute Bibles to believers who either cannot afford them or whose Bibles were destroyed in attacks.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 26-27 8/11/26 8:18 AM

DJIBOUTI



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Djibouti is mainland Africa's third-smallest nation. It is dominated by two majority-Muslim groups, the Afar and the Somali, and is nearly surrounded by parts of neighboring countries that serve as safe havens for Islamic terrorists. Despite this, Djibouti itself is not dominated by extremists. The capital hosts many foreigners, and international aid groups operate freely out of the country. Even though Islam is the official state religion, the rights of Christians are generally respected, Bibles are legally available, and there is no law preventing Muslims from converting. Still, Djibouti seeks to maintain its Muslim identity, and Christian organizations are not allowed to officially register.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 98 percent of Djiboutians are Sunni Muslims. 1 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam may experience government oppression, but most persecution comes from families and local Muslim communities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN DJIBOUTI: The government tries to limit the spread of Christianity and the growth of churches by prohibiting public meetings and the construction of buildings for Christian activities. The only churches allowed to worship openly are French Protestant, Roman Catholic and Ethiopian Orthodox. Foreigners are granted personal religious freedom, but evangelism and the discipleship of new believers are discouraged. Muslims who express an interest in Christ face the risk of persecution from family and friends, and those who convert are isolated, beaten and sometimes killed for abandoning Islam.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available, but owning one in some communities comes with the risk of government harassment or violence at the hands of Muslim family members and the Muslim community.

VOM WORK: VOM supports Christians who are persecuted because of their faith.

EGYPT



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Egypt has the fastest-growing population in the Middle East and also the largest Christian population among majority-Arab nations. It remains a base for Christian activity throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Many well-established churches and parachurch ministries in Egypt are working to strengthen the faith of Christians and reach Muslims with the gospel. Several of these groups also send their own Egyptian missionaries throughout the region. While overt Christian activity results in persecution, church growth and the establishment of Egypt as a regional base of missionary activity are signs of an obedient, bold witness.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 86 percent of Egyptians are Sunni Muslims. 13 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Various Islamic extremist groups operate in Egypt, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS).

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN EGYPT: Christians who are outspoken about their faith are often beaten or imprisoned. When Christians are attacked or kidnapped by Muslims, the government rarely provides protection or assistance. Christian converts from Islam face the most problems, including being expelled from their families, being divorced by their Muslim spouses, losing their children and losing their jobs. Additionally, because their government-issued identity cards identify them as Muslim, it is difficult for them to attend church, to marry, to register their children in school, to get a job or to emigrate elsewhere. Christians charged with apostasy or proselytizing Muslims are generally imprisoned for a week or two, with a few notable exceptions.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are readily available at Bible societies, churches and bookstores in a variety of formats, translations and

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 28-29 8/11/26 8:18 AM

languages. However, not all Egyptian Christians can afford a Bible, and persecution and high illiteracy rates make Bible distribution an ongoing challenge.

VOM WORK: VOM responds to widespread persecution needs, provides Bibles and Christian literature, distributes assistance, and trains pastors and other leaders.

ERITREA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Located on the Red Sea, Eritrea is governed by a totalitarian regime that seeks to control every aspect of life. Some have compared Eritrea to the "hermit kingdom" of North Korea, as it is one of the most secretive and isolated countries in the world. In 2002, the government outlawed every form of religion except Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism and the Lutheran Church. All other religious groups are illegal, and the government maintains tight control of approved churches, including their messages. Years of communism, mandatory military service and economic depression have caused many Eritreans to flee the country. But during the recent war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, the Eritrean army was allowed to cross the border and destroy two Eritrean refugee camps, taking many refugees, including Christians, back to Eritrea. In the past few years, the government has released some Christian prisoners while arresting several new groups. While the 2018 peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia ended a two-decade war, the benefits have been one-sided. Ethiopians may travel freely between the two countries, but travel for Eritreans is restricted by their government. Despite these hardships, the body of Christ in Eritrea continues to grow due to the faithfulness of church leaders inside and outside the country.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: The population is nearly evenly divided between Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians. About 3 percent hold evangelical Christian beliefs, which the government deems illegal.

PERSECUTOR: The authoritarian government harasses, arrests and imprisons Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN ERITREA:
Evangelical churches must meet secretly. The government actively seeks to infiltrate these underground churches and imprison their leaders. More than 200 believers are known to remain in prison, including several top leaders. Imprisoned Christians are not given a trial or allowed to see their families, many of whom do not know where their loved ones are

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 30-31 8/11/26 8:18 AM

imprisoned or even if they are still alive. Christians simply disappear and are assumed to be in government prisons. The conditions inside these "prisons" are some of the harshest in the world. Christian prisoners are provided meager rations and held in shipping containers in extreme desert conditions for years. When long-term prisoners are released, they are blacklisted by the government. They are unable to get jobs, they are watched constantly, and their families lose opportunities. They still need extended physical and emotional help.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available, but the government tracks each Bible sold. Christian literature is highly regulated, and most believers who want Bibles must smuggle them in. For this reason, many believers must access Scripture by digital means.

VOM WORK: VOM supports Christian prisoners and their families. We provide Bibles and Christian literature to believers inside Eritrea.



ETHIOPIA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: The gospel was first brought to Ethiopia in the first century, but many Ethiopian Christians still face persecution today. In southern Ethiopia, political unrest and the rise of Wahhabism (an extreme branch of Islam) among the Oromo people have resulted in a wave of attacks against Christians across the region. Eastern Ethiopia has one of the largest Somali populations in the world, and Christians there are persecuted by both their communities and their families. In northern Ethiopia, militants among the Ethiopian Orthodox Church persecute Christians outside their denomination. Several Muslim-majority tribal groups throughout Ethiopia also persecute Christians. Freedom of religion is guaranteed under Ethiopian law, and the national government generally works to protect the rights of Christians, but recent political unrest has created opportunities for large attacks on Christians and churches throughout the country. Still, many churches in Ethiopia continue to plant new churches and send missionaries to difficult areas. In November 2020, a civil war broke out in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, causing immense suffering and greatly affecting churches and pastors.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 59 percent of Ethiopians are Christians. Islam is growing, and Muslims now compose nearly 40 percent of the population.

PERSECUTOR: Believers in the south and east face persecution, especially those who leave Islam to follow Christ. Some believers living in the north are persecuted by militants among the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and armed rebel groups attack Christians and churches.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN ETHIOPIA: Most Christians worship freely and openly. However, believers from other denominations are sometimes pressured by militants among the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and Christian converts from Islam face violence and even death threats in Muslim-majority areas.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are printed, sold and distributed in Ethiopia with no restrictions. However, in many rural areas, believers can be severely persecuted for owning a Bible.

VOM WORK: VOM helps rebuild destroyed churches and believers' homes, helps care for widows of martyrs, provides Bibles to believers in persecuted areas, supports local church evangelism efforts and equips pastors in difficult regions.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 32-33 8/11/26 8:18 AM

A PRAYER

FOR CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Dear heavenly Father,

With confidence in your loving kindness, we draw near to your throne of grace on behalf of our persecuted Christian family in Algeria, Morocco, Iraq and Jordan, asking that they may receive your mercy and find that your grace is all-sufficient in their time of need.

We ask that Christians imprisoned in Libya will experience your peace that surpasses all understanding. Empower them to share their faith with fellow prisoners and provide opportunities to worship and pray together with other Christians, even behind bars.

For our Christian brothers and sisters in Egypt who have left Islam to follow Christ, may they find acceptance and love in the body of Christ when their earthly families reject them and severely persecute them.

Help Christians in restricted nations like Mauritania, Western Sahara, Bahrain and Yemen, where access to your Word is limited and risky, to have opportunities to study the Scriptures with other believers.

And finally, we pray for our brothers and sisters in areas of ongoing conflict, like Syria, Israel and Lebanon. Help them faithfully bear witness to you amid violence and hardship, and may they know they are loved by the global body of Christ.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

INDIA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Hindu nationalist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has seen a 20 percent increase in membership. Its emboldened base seeks to forcibly unite India under Hinduism despite the country's great diversity of languages, cultures and religions. Although Prime Minister Modi has publicly said his government will not tolerate religious discrimination, his actions have proved otherwise. Vague policies, such as laws forbidding the conversion of Hindus, have passed in several Indian states, and the push for a similar federal law has gained support. These state anti-conversion laws have long been used against pastors, church planters and evangelists. Conversely, reconversion ceremonies known as *Ghar Wapsi*, or "homecoming," which return Indians to Hinduism (sometimes by force), have become increasingly common. Despite greater government restrictions on Christianity, churches are growing.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: About 80 percent of Indians are Hindus, and more than 10 percent are Muslims. India is also the birthplace of Buddhism. The Indian government does not release accurate statistics about its Christian population, so exact figures are not available. While there are an estimated 30 to 70 million Christians in India, this is no more than a 5 percent minority among India's staggering population of nearly 1.4 billion people.

PERSECUTOR: The main persecutors are well-organized Hindu extremist groups, local governments and nationalist Hindus who seek to "purify" India by making it entirely Hindu. They seek to appease Hindu deities by eliminating Christians, and they view Christian converts as traitors to the Hindu homeland.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN INDIA:
Hindu-nationalist informants live in nearly every village and report on the activities of Christians, resulting in attacks and arrests. When Christians are attacked, they often drop charges against their attackers to show forgiveness as a witness for Christ. Churches have been demolished, burned and shut down; worship gatherings have been disrupted;

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 34-35 8/11/26 8:18 AM

crosses in graveyards have been vandalized; and Bibles and other Christian literature have been confiscated and burned. Many pastors and evangelists, including women, have been beaten and jailed, and several are martyred each year. Christians are often arrested and detained up to three months after being falsely accused of forcing Hindus to convert to Christianity. With legal assistance, they are normally able to post bail or show that the charges are unfounded, but their court proceedings often continue for several years. In Uttar Pradesh, the state's anti-conversion law became much stricter in July 2024, providing for a maximum sentence of life in prison.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Even though India has one of the largest Bible societies in the world, many rural Christians have never had access to a Bible. Bibles remain unaffordable for those who suffer severe poverty resulting from oppression in Hindu- and Muslim-controlled areas. In addition, the remoteness of some areas and widespread illiteracy continue to pose challenges for Bible distribution.

VOM WORK: VOM responds to persecution incidents and supports persecuted pastors and their families as well as front-line workers. We provide Bibles and other practical help to Christians living in India's most hostile areas.



INDONESIA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Indonesia has one of the world's largest Muslim populations, with 234 million Muslims or about one-tenth of the world's Muslim population. While most Indonesian Muslims practice an animistic and superstitious version of Islam known as "folk" Islam, proponents of Islamic extremism have encouraged and engaged in violence against Christians. The wickedness of these attacks has led many Muslims to question Islam and to be more open to the gospel. Bold evangelists are taking advantage of this opportunity to share the gospel and lead many Muslims to faith in Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 82 percent of Indonesians are Sunni Muslims. 13 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The main persecutors in Indonesia are Islamic extremists, who influence moderate Muslims. However, on the island of Bali, the main persecutors are Hindus. While the government does not normally persecute Christians, neither does it consistently defend them.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN INDONESIA: Even though it is illegal to evangelize, it is legal, though difficult, for Muslims and others to convert to Christianity. Christians living in cities can worship openly. In rural areas, Christians who actively share their faith face persecution from Muslims, local governments and the community. In some areas, small house churches of about 12 people are generally tolerated and allowed to meet openly. Muslims pay a price for converting to Christianity, and even in cities, most Christian converts from Islam choose to attend churches outside their community. Those who openly share their faith face pressure from family members because their conversion affects the family's social standing. Muslim families often disown their children who come to faith in Christ. Foreigners who openly evangelize Muslims are required to leave the country. One Indonesian province, Aceh, has implemented Islamic law.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 36-37 8/11/26 8:18 AM

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in most cities, but not in many rural locations. Indonesians can legally own a Bible, and the Indonesia Bible Society prints Bibles inside the country. However, many live in hostile and remote areas where Bibles are unavailable, and others cannot afford to purchase one.

VOM WORK: VOM trains believers, assists with church-planting efforts in difficult areas and helps relocate front-line workers under threat. VOM also places Bibles in the hands of those living in the areas of greatest persecution, where there are often no other sources for Bibles or other Christian materials.



IRAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: The Islamic Revolution of 1979, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, created the world's only Shiite Islamic theocracy and profoundly changed every aspect of life in Iran. While Iran has elected presidents, the country is ultimately led by Muslim clerics. Today, many of those who committed their lives to Islam and Islamic rule are filled with despair. This disillusionment has opened new doors for the gospel, which is sweeping across the nation via Christian media and bold evangelists in Iran's growing house church movements. However, the government continues its attempts to thwart this work of God. Christian leaders and pastors are often arrested, tortured and imprisoned, and their families are harassed. Some, left with no other options, choose to flee the country.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: More than 97 percent of Iranians are identified by the government as Muslims, but a significant segment of the population has abandoned Islam, and many have come to faith in Christ.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted by government authorities, who have networks of informants in each city. Family, friends and community members also persecute Christians, especially when news of a conversion becomes public.

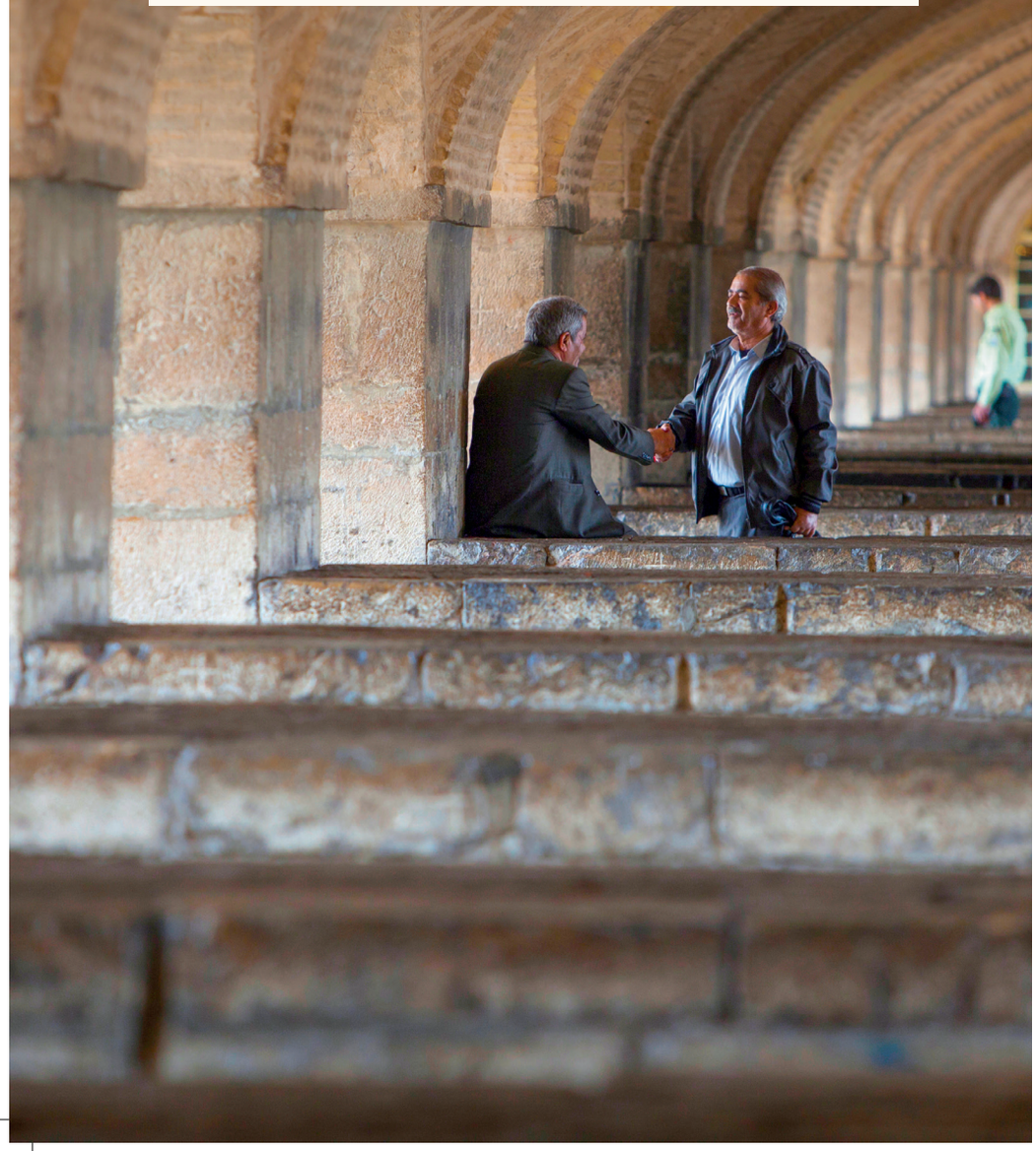
WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN IRAN: The Iranian government is among the most oppressive regimes in the world. It is illegal to leave Islam, and Christians face the constant threat of imprisonment and being falsely charged with "acting against national security" for owning Bibles or even talking about Christ. Christians are routinely fired from their jobs, and it is difficult for a known believer to find a job or rent a home. Many Christians gather in covert fellowships and receive teaching through Christian media smuggled into the country and through broadcast media. A significant number of Christians are currently imprisoned.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 38-39 8/11/26 8:18 AM

ACCESS TO BIBLES: It is illegal to own, print, import or distribute Bibles. Since they are so difficult to obtain, Bibles are treasured by Iranian believers. Few have their own copy of God's Word.

VOM WORK: VOM provides encouragement, support and training for former prisoners as they rebuild their lives. We also provide discipleship and leadership training for current and future Christian leaders. VOM is actively involved in smuggling God's Word to believers inside Iran.



IRAQ



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: The three largest Muslim groups (Shiite Arab, Sunni Arab and Sunni Kurdish) in modern-day Iraq have been in conflict for centuries. Attacks by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) forced tens of thousands of Christians to flee the country, leaving a small but bold and faithful remnant. For many of these Iraqi Christians, day-to-day life is focused on survival, yet they faithfully work to advance the gospel. Many of Iraq's Muslims have rejected Islam and become open to Christ for a variety of reasons, including the corruption and violence rampant among both radical Sunni Muslims (including ISIS) and Shiites (including the Iraqi government, backed by Iran). These circumstances provide a unique opportunity to share the gospel with Iraqis searching for hope and truth. The violence and instability have also led to a revival among traditional Christians, many of whom have come to saving faith and become bold witnesses for Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Iraq's population is divided between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Iraq is home to the second-largest population of Shiite Muslims, after Iran. Iraq's Christian population has suffered severely at the hands of Islamists, decreasing from more than 1.2 million to fewer than 300,000 as the country has endured continual war and instability for more than two decades.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam are abused and rejected by their families. In addition, they may be killed or persecuted by clan or tribe members, government authorities or extremist groups.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN IRAQ: Northern Iraq is still home to many Christians, who have a degree of freedom to worship even though they are under Islamist threat. Christians in other parts of the nation, especially those who are converts from Islam, are under continual threat of violence, including abduction and murder.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 40-41 8/11/26 8:18 AM

Iraq continued

ACCESS TO BIBLES: ISIS and other Islamist groups destroyed every copy of God's Word they could find, but because of the work of Bible societies and missions organizations, including VOM, many Christians in Iraq have their own Bible; several formats are available, including audio Bibles and children's Bibles.

VOM WORK: VOM supports persecuted believers, especially displaced Christians. Additionally, we distribute Bibles, including audio Bibles and Bibles in minority languages, in several regions.



ISRAEL (INCLUDING THE WEST BANK & GAZA)

DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: The decades-long conflict between the Israeli government and Palestinian authorities over the city of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the land and the status of Palestinian refugees remains among the world's most volatile issues. During this conflict, both Jews and Muslims have been coming to faith in Christ despite their religions' instructions to reject Christ as Lord and Savior. Christian activity is routinely opposed by Islamists among the Palestinian Arab populations of the West Bank and Gaza, and occasionally opposed by ultra-Orthodox and other anti-missionary Jews in Israel proper. Despite this opposition, some churches include both Jews who have accepted Christ as the Messiah and Arabs who have left Islam and placed their faith in Jesus. Active ministry efforts among both groups involve Bible distribution, discipleship, evangelism, church planting and theological education. The Palestinian Authority maintains some control over the West Bank under Israeli federal authority, while the militant Muslim group Hamas is active in the Gaza Strip. Both groups are adamantly opposed to Christian activity and indoctrinate their populace to hate the West, Jews and Christians.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: The two major religions in Israel are Judaism and Sunni Islam, with Christians composing a 2 percent minority.

PERSECUTOR: In Muslim regions, Christian converts from Islam face severe persecution from their families, society, Palestinian government authorities and Hamas. In Jewish communities, Jews who follow Christ risk rejection, social pressure and occasional violence from ultra-Orthodox Jews and organized anti-missionary groups.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN ISRAEL: Christian converts from Islam in the West Bank and Gaza face violence at the hands of their family members and local governments, which are run by the Palestinian authorities. Christians in Israel proper often experience family rejection, low social standing and limited opportunities for job advancement. Jewish anti-missionary groups, especially Yad L'Achim, sometimes protest outside churches, cursing Christians and vandalizing their buildings. The anti-missionary activities have at times included violence against Christians.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 42-43 8/11/26 8:18 AM

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bible societies operate in Israel, including the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Christians have access to Bibles throughout the country, though they are dangerous for Christians or seekers to possess in Islamist-controlled areas.

VOM WORK: VOM supports front-line workers in key regions, supports training for local churches and helps with Bible distributions. We also provide legal aid for Messianic (Christian) Jews who are harassed or deprived of their legal rights.



JORDAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Jordan has experienced an influx of refugees from neighboring countries since the 1950s, with nearly half the current population composed of refugees. The refugee situation became especially severe in recent years as Syrians began arriving in large numbers during their country's civil war, which continued for more than two decades. Ministry among Jordanian Christians has been focused on serving these refugees, and as God works powerfully among Arab Muslim refugees, Jordanian Christians are emboldened as never before to reach out to their Muslim neighbors.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 96 percent of Jordanians are Sunni Muslims. 2 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam are persecuted, sometimes violently, by their families, tribes and communities. The Jordanian government restricts open evangelism and sometimes also Bible distribution activities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN JORDAN: Christians are free to meet openly, but they have difficulty getting government approval to open new churches or church facilities. Gatherings of believers are monitored, and Muslims who convert to Christianity often meet privately in homes to avoid drawing extra attention. Family members often create severe hardships for these believers by taking their homes, children, jobs and inheritances.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available through Bible societies and bookstores.

VOM WORK: VOM helps respond to persecution attacks and the needs of Christian refugees. We also provide training for Christian leaders.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 44-45 8/11/26 8:18 AM

A PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH ASIA

Dear heavenly Father,

Thank you for the faithful witness of our brothers and sisters in South Asia who are willing to advance your kingdom at any cost.

We ask that your Spirit will strengthen them to stand against opposition from radical Hindus and Buddhists who seek to silence the gospel. Sustain pastors and evangelists in India as they face imprisonment and fines when state governments use anti-conversion laws to arrest them. And when Buddhist monks stir up communities against believers in Sri Lanka and Nepal, may your church boldly continue to preach the gospel.

We thank you for the testimony of Christians in India who show forgiveness to their attackers as a witness for Christ. And we thank you for our brothers and sisters in Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, who faithfully follow you despite risk of harassment, imprisonment and even death.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



KAZAKHSTAN

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Formerly under Communist rule as a republic of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan is one of Central Asia's wealthiest nations because of its vast mineral resources. Islam has experienced a resurgence since the fall of the Soviet Union, and many have returned to what they consider their Muslim heritage, which was restricted for decades by atheistic communism. Today, Kazakhstan emulates its European neighbors, undertaking massive construction projects, enjoying a growing economy and adopting the Latin alphabet used by Western nations.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 52 percent of Kazakhs are Sunni Muslims. The next-largest group includes those who are atheists or non-religious, a legacy of atheistic Communist rule. 15 percent of the population are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted by their families and communities. Churches and Christians outside Russian Orthodoxy are restricted and harassed by the government through excessive fines, loss of land, and restrictions on teaching children about religion.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN KAZAKHSTAN: Christian converts are often disowned by their families and publicly shamed. All religious activities must be registered with the government, and believers are commonly fined for distributing unauthorized religious texts, discussing faith or holding worship meetings. The government allows more freedom to Russian Orthodox Christians, who make up nearly 15 percent of the population, but they are suspicious of Christians outside the Orthodox churches who worship in the native Kazakh language. Unregistered churches must meet in private homes, and the process to register a church gets more difficult daily.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available, but distribution is restricted, and they are difficult to obtain outside large cities.

VOM WORK: VOM provides Bibles and supports front-line workers in the most difficult areas.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 46-47 8/11/26 8:19 AM

KENYA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Kenya is predominantly Christian, but several tribal groups in the north remain largely unreached, and much of the coastal region is predominantly Muslim. Additionally, in the region known as Greater Somalia in northeastern Kenya, 90 percent of the population is ethnically Somali and fervently Muslim. In these areas, Christian missionaries from other parts of Kenya and converts from Islam are often attacked and have been killed. There are some churches in these regions, but their activities are severely limited by the local communities. The Kenyan constitution grants every citizen freedom of religion, but local governments in resistant areas are led by Muslim officials who do little to protect the rights of believers.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 78 percent of Kenyans are Christians. However, parts of the country have a Muslim majority with significant Islamist activity and influence.

PERSECUTOR: Islamic extremists are most active in the north and east, and their activities extend to Nairobi in the south. In the coastal areas, community members and local governments also persecute Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN KENYA: Christians cannot openly discuss their faith in areas with a Somali majority or areas near the northern border without risk of losing their family, livelihood and standing in their community. There is a significant threat of violence against Christian converts in Somali-majority areas. In northeastern Kenya, the al-Shabab Islamic terrorist group attacks Christians, bombing churches and killing believers. In Muslim-majority coastal and northeastern areas, Christians are persecuted by local governments and rejected by their families and communities.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available, but they are hard to find in the Muslim-majority areas and in some dialects.

VOM WORK: VOM supports the widows of Christian martyrs, pastors and evangelists working in hostile areas and also supports sustainability projects for believers who have been ostracized because of their faith. VOM serves many individuals and families from a Muslim background who have been disowned and persecuted by their family or community after converting to Christianity. Our Bible distribution efforts focus on providing Bibles to children and those who speak minority dialects.

KUWAIT



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Kuwaitis have amassed significant wealth from their national oil reserves. As a result, a great deal of labor is outsourced to foreigners in the country. This foreign-labor economy has created opportunities for foreigners who have a heart to reach Kuwaitis with the gospel, despite the risk to their jobs and residency status. There is a sharp divide between Kuwait's younger generation, which includes many who reject Islam and are open to new ideas, and Kuwait's older, more traditionally Muslim generation.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Kuwaitis identify themselves as Sunni Muslims, even though many do not practice their faith. Many Christian foreign workers are present in Kuwait, but churches are allowed only on designated compounds.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam are opposed by their families and communities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN KUWAIT: Kuwaiti authorities are opposed to Christian witnessing and conversion. The small handful of indigenous Kuwaiti believers must exercise extreme care in disclosing their faith in Christ. If they are discovered and refuse to return to Islam, they may be disowned, beaten or killed. A small number of converts have been accepted by their families and are even able to attend worship services.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Access to Bibles is severely restricted. Most prefer to access Scripture online because of the risks associated with owning a Bible.

VOM WORK: VOM serves those who have been persecuted and supports the training of local believers in evangelism and discipleship.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 48-49 8/11/26 8:19 AM

KYRGYZSTAN

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Kyrgyzstan is a remote mountainous nation with a nomadic tribal culture. It is also one of the poorest former Soviet states in Central Asia. A significant portion of the population has left to work elsewhere, and life in Kyrgyzstan is hard. After decades of Communist rule, most Kyrgyz have returned to their nation's pre-Communist Islamic cultural identity.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 93 percent of Kyrgyz are Sunni Muslims. 4 percent of the population are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted mostly by family members and their communities, including Muslim religious leaders. Secret police are also known to harass and interrogate believers suspected of evangelism.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN KYRGYZSTAN: Some churches worship openly, even in small towns, but being a Christian is difficult because of Islamic control. Christian converts are commonly threatened and harassed, and the small Christian minority is generally oppressed by society. For example, buses will not stop for those known to be Christians in small communities, and believers have difficulty getting jobs and even purchasing goods. In some communities, Muslim leaders have denied the burial of deceased Christians.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are more accessible in Kyrgyzstan than in other Central Asian nations. They can be purchased at registered churches in larger cities, but they are expensive.

VOM WORK: VOM helps Christian women who are kicked out of their homes for their faith, provides Bibles to believers in multiple ethnic groups and helps believers become self-supporting.





LAOS

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: The Communist government, in conjunction with Buddhist monks, persecutes Christians, with the exception of the government-controlled Lao Evangelical Church. Poverty, lack of infrastructure and mountainous terrain make evangelistic outreach challenging. Thanks to bold evangelists, churches continue to grow even as they experience ongoing persecution.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 60 percent of Laotians consider themselves to be Buddhists, but most practice a syncretistic version of Buddhism mixed with tribal animism. 4 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Most believers are persecuted by family members or village authorities concerned that Christians offend the spirits, and the central government restricts Christian activity.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN LAOS: Some in Laos, particularly those in government leadership, view Christianity as a foreign religion and a tool used by the West to undermine the Communist Laotian regime. There are many house churches and some church buildings, but the vast majority do not have a trained pastor. Laotian authorities sometimes arrest Christians and detain them for up to a week in attempts to control Christian activity. Christians are commonly denied medical treatment as well as educational and other social services.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are not sold in bookstores. Government-sanctioned churches sell Bibles, and other organizations are able to bring Bibles in with legal permission. But the government restricts and opposes Bible and Christian literature distribution of any significant size.

VOM WORK: VOM distributes Bibles, prints Christian literature and provides audio devices containing Scripture and discipleship resources. VOM also responds to persecution incidents by relocating families inside Laos and providing food and other needs.



LEBANON



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Many Muslims in Lebanon have suffered greatly at the hands of other Muslims during Syria's civil war; the resulting disillusionment with Islam has created a new openness to Christ. Because Lebanon has a significant Christian population and its government protects freedom of worship, it has become a safe haven for displaced Christians throughout the region. More than 1 million Syrian refugees have entered the country since 2012, increasing Lebanon's population by nearly one-fourth. Despite the hardships, many churches in Lebanon have not only welcomed but also cared for Christian and Muslim Syrian refugees, who have limited resources and few rights in the country. Lebanese churches distribute Bibles and Christian literature alongside food and other necessities. Many Muslim refugees have bravely attended home Bible studies and church services to learn about Christ. Significant numbers have placed their faith in Christ, been baptized and become active in local churches. Some Christian converts from Islam are actively witnessing to Muslims.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 59 percent of Lebanese are Muslims, evenly divided between Sunni and Shiite. 33 percent are Christians. Members of the country's small Druze minority, a secretive monotheistic faith, sometimes persecute Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Various Islamic extremist groups, including Hezbollah in the south and other Shiite-majority regions, actively persecute Christians. Sunni extremist cells affiliated with the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), al-Qaida and other groups are active near the Syrian border. Christian converts are also persecuted by their communities and families.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN LEBANON:
Lebanon's urban areas are open and Westernized, but Christians outside the prominent cities and especially in Muslim-majority areas face significant opposition and threat. Those born into Christian families are allowed to worship openly, but Christians face ongoing harassment from the Muslim majority, such as denial of land acquisition and increased tax rates. More severe forms of persecution occur when believers share their faith or when Muslims come to faith in Christ. Christian converts from Islam are persecuted mostly by family and the community.

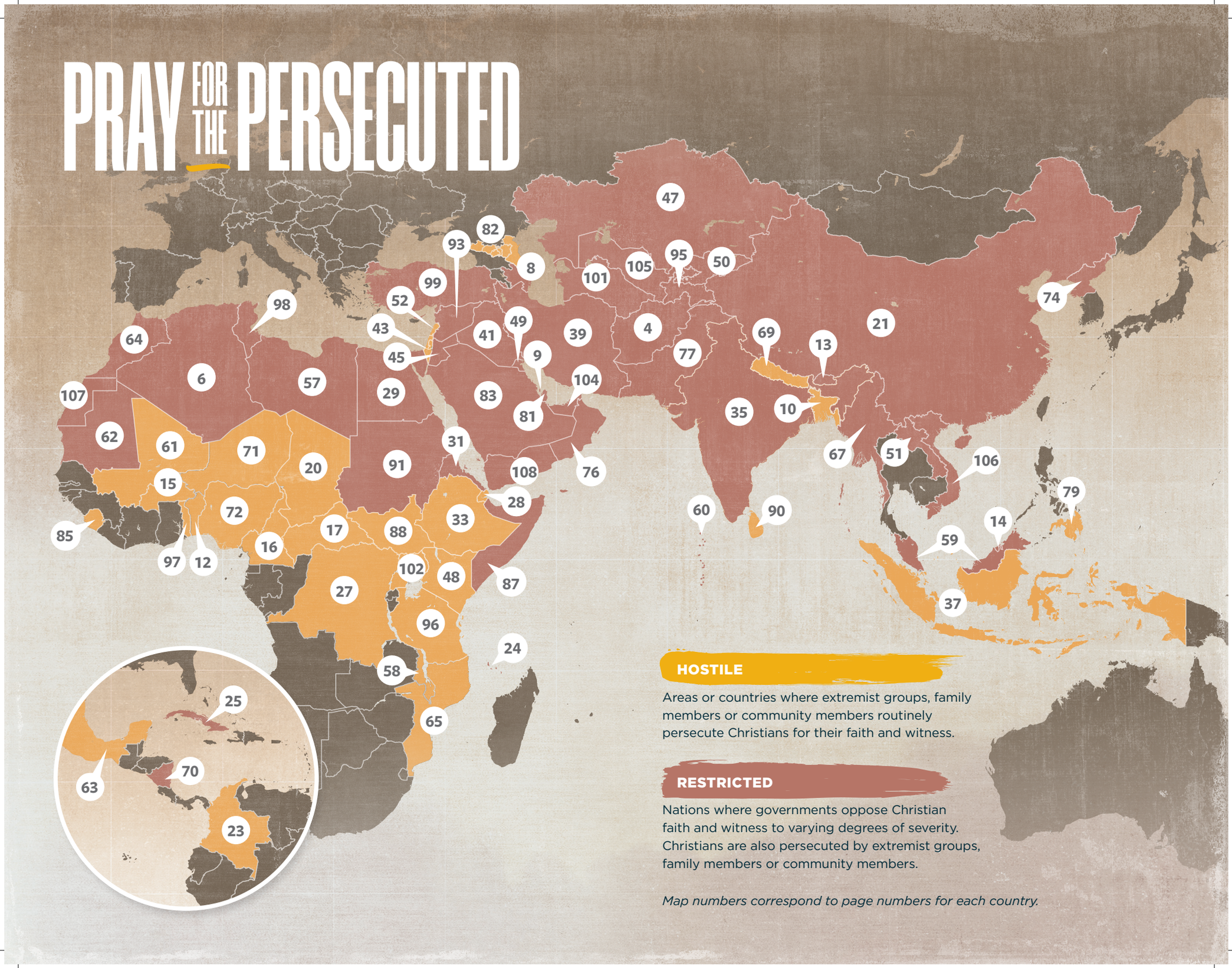
ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available through Bible societies, local churches and bookstores.

VOM WORK: Because Lebanon has become a refuge for Christian converts fleeing persecution in other countries and because of persecution within Lebanon itself, VOM supports many persecuted believers in Lebanon in a variety of ways. VOM also helps meet the basic needs of Christian refugees who have been driven from their homes. We partner with local churches to provide Bibles as well as medical and education assistance. We also assist a broad network of evangelists and church planters in frontier areas and support training for Christian leaders.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 52-53 8/11/26 8:19 AM

PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED



HOSTILE

Areas or countries where extremist groups, family members or community members routinely persecute Christians for their faith and witness.

RESTRICTED

Nations where governments oppose Christian faith and witness to varying degrees of severity. Christians are also persecuted by extremist groups, family members or community members.

Map numbers correspond to page numbers for each country.

A PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIANS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Dear heavenly Father,

We thank you for the love you have for us, shown in the work of Christ Jesus on the cross. We praise you that this love is shared with our brothers and sisters in Central Asia.

As governments in Central Asia restrict Christian teaching and discipleship, grant Christians wisdom and boldness to continue advancing your kingdom.

We pray for our youngest brothers and sisters, especially for children in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, where it is illegal to teach Christianity to anyone under 18 without government approval. We pray for parents and pastors who face fines and interrogations for discipling their children, asking that your Spirit will equip them to remain faithful at any cost.

And may your steadfast love comfort our persecuted Christian family in the North Caucuses of Russia, where those who convert from Islam to Christianity face harsh treatment from family members and communities.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



LIBYA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Libya has remained unstable and chaotic since the revolution and overthrow of its dictator in 2011. Three opposing governments vie for control, and the conflicts have severely damaged the country's infrastructure and made gospel work in the country extremely difficult. Many missionaries and indigenous believers have been killed in recent years, and gospel work in the country is ruthlessly opposed.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 97 percent of Libyans are Sunni Muslims. 2 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Extremist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), operate throughout the country. Friends and family also severely persecute Christian converts from Islam.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN LIBYA: Life is difficult in Libya, and the difficulties are compounded for Christians and especially Christian converts from Islam. There are few believers in Libya, and it is extremely difficult for them to practice their faith openly. Christians are rejected by their Muslim families and friends. They are beaten, lose families and jobs, and are sometimes killed. It is unknown how many Christians are imprisoned in Libya.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Access to Bibles is severely restricted; they are brought into the country with extreme difficulty and risk. Christians in Libya take great risks just to own a Bible, including digital formats used on smartphones and computers.

VOM WORK: VOM supports strategies that allow believers to gather for fellowship and teaching, despite extreme risks, and that aim to give Libyans greater access to God's Word in various formats.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 56-57 8/11/26 8:19 AM

MALAWI



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Malawi is a small, landlocked country of 21.9 million people in eastern Africa, located southwest of Tanzania and west of Mozambique. After gaining independence from Britain in 1964, Malawi was governed by a dictatorship until 1994, when a general election resulted in a new democratic government. Though Malawi is a predominantly Christian nation, persecution has increased in recent years. The persecution has coincided with a significant turning to God among the Yao people, a historically Muslim tribe of 2.5 million people.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Malawi is 74 percent Christian and 17 percent Muslim. Traditional animistic beliefs are also common, influencing religious practices in the country.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam among the Yao people are persecuted by their communities, families and friends, but Malawi has an abundance of vibrant churches.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MALAWI: In most of Malawi, Christians are free to worship and serve the Lord. But Christian converts among the Yao people face intense opposition to their faith, enduring beatings, death threats, the burning of their churches and more, especially in Yao villages. Some Christian converts from Islam among the Yao people have been driven from their communities, and gospel workers are also sometimes expelled. In some cases, Christians have been told they have 24 hours to leave before a *fatwa*, a public condemnation from an Islamic leader, is issued against them.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles can be purchased in Malawi, but they are prohibitively expensive for most Christians. Many Christians lost their Bibles in March 2023, when a cyclone dumped six months' worth of rain on Malawi in six days. The cyclone killed more than 1,200 people and devastated the economy, destroying countless farms, homes and churches in southern Malawi.

VOM WORK: VOM is actively supporting Christians in the Yao community by helping rebuild destroyed homes and churches, providing shelter for victims of persecution and supplying Bibles.

MALAYSIA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Malaysia has three major ethnicities — Malay (60 percent), Chinese (30 percent) and Tamil (7 percent) — and various native tribes. The Malays are the most powerful group in the country, and being Muslim is considered an important part of their identity. Most Christians are from the tribal and Chinese people groups, and most churches experience relative freedom as long as they do not evangelize the Malays.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 56 percent of Malaysians are Sunni Muslims, but there is also a significant Buddhist population. 9 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The government has severely punished Malay Christian converts. Persecution can also extend to those ministering to the Malay.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MALAYSIA: While Christianity is not illegal, Christians are marginalized by the ruling Muslim ethnic group and have difficulty acquiring building permits for new churches. Most churches work in the languages of Mandarin, Tamil and English, with very few using the Malay language. Those that do are not targeting Malay people. Malay Christian converts from Islam who are caught are confined to so-called reeducation camps that use torture and propaganda to force them to return to Islam. Many indigenous people have come to Christ in eastern Malaysia.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: It is illegal for Malay people to own a Bible, and Malay-language Bibles are largely unavailable outside Christian-majority areas.

VOM WORK: VOM supports front-line workers and persecuted Malay Christians.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 58-59 8/11/26 8:19 AM

MALDIVES



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: The Maldives is one of the most restricted nations in the world, with fewer than 30 known indigenous believers. Any Maldivian who follows Christ faces imprisonment or expulsion from the country. The Maldivian government seeks to eliminate or greatly minimize outside influences that could affect its citizens' cultural identity, which includes complete commitment to Islam.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Even though many Maldivians have little knowledge of Islam, all Maldivians are officially required to be Sunni Muslims; the government enforces this rule without exception.

PERSECUTOR: The government is the main persecutor, and Maldivian society is aligned with the country's commitment to ensuring that every Maldivian remains a Muslim. In addition to government persecution, seekers and converts receive tremendous pressure from their families and communities.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE MALDIVES: The country's oppressive anti-Christian government and culture make it one of the world's most challenging regions for Christian work. Seekers and new converts experience extreme social pressure. Small, close-knit island communities enable the government to maintain tight control over the population. Christian converts have been imprisoned in attempts to pressure them to renounce Christ and return to Islam, and they are usually forced to leave their homes and perhaps even the country.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: It is illegal to import Bibles, but some Maldivians access Scripture through the internet. Translation of the Bible into Dhivehi, the main language of the Maldives, is ongoing, but the work has been difficult and slow because of the small number of Christian converts who are able and willing to help with translation.

VOM WORK: VOM supports creative, covert methods to share the gospel and plant churches inside the Maldives.

MALI



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Mali is a poor country with a growing population that remains predominantly Muslim. Although missionaries arrived in the early 1920s and have worked in most areas of the country, there are few Christians. Small congregations of believers continue to worship in towns known to be centers of Islamist activity. Several missionaries have been kidnapped in Mali or have been abducted in neighboring countries and brought to Mali in recent years. Threats by Islamist groups have led some mission agencies to withdraw workers from the country. Recent military coups have led to sanctions by the international community, further degrading Mali's economy.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 88 percent of Malians are Sunni Muslims, with most also practicing animism. 3 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Islamic extremist groups persecute Christians in Mali.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MALI: In 2012, believers fled to the south as extremist groups in the north destroyed church buildings and pastors' homes in their efforts to create an Islamic state. Christian converts from Islam face harassment from family members and their communities. Open and active churches exist in the north, though outreach and evangelism in the community can be dangerous. Several pastors were forced to leave after receiving death threats for actively sharing their faith.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are scarce and difficult to obtain outside the capital, especially in minority languages.

VOM WORK: VOM provides Bibles, pastor training and assistance for persecuted Christians.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 60-61 8/11/26 8:19 AM

MAURITANIA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Mauritania is dominated by Islamist leadership and struggles with poverty and corruption. Located on Africa's western coast, Mauritania has strong connections and cultural similarities to its North African neighbors. Slavery still exists within tribal groups, with Christians commonly subservient to the majority-Moor people groups. In 2009, an American missionary was killed in Mauritania, and many mission agencies subsequently withdrew their workers from the country. Other indigenous and near-culture leaders have also been killed. Some Christian workers, however, are starting to return. Mauritania has been staunchly Islamic for more than 1,000 years, and the security risks for both national Christians and foreign missionaries remain obstacles to reaching Muslims with the gospel.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Mauritanians are Sunni Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: Families, tribes, communities and the government persecute those who leave Islam in Mauritania.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MAURITANIA: Only a few hundred local believers are known to live in the country. All indigenous Christians converted from Islam, though conversion is illegal. Jobs are difficult to obtain in the poor economy, especially for Christians. Believers have been arrested.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: It is extremely difficult for Christians to get Bibles, which must be hand-carried into the country at great risk. No Bibles are printed in the country, and the importation of Bibles is restricted.

VOM WORK: VOM supplies audio Bibles, supports underground churches and provides training and encouragement to believers.

MEXICO



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Specific areas within Mexico have a high concentration of indigenous minority groups. These minority communities, which maintain a separate identity and language, are systematically oppressed by local authorities. Christians among them are persecuted by Marxist and animist groups as well as village leaders. Tribal leaders persecute Christians in defense of their indigenous culture in several rural areas, and the federal government allows this. These communities are remotely located and difficult to reach. Despite persecution, the number of Christians has continued to grow in these areas.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Many people in rural Mexico practice a syncretistic blend of pagan practices and Roman Catholicism. There is a strong Marxist (atheistic communist) movement in some southern areas, especially in the state of Chiapas.

PERSECUTOR: Syncretistic pagan leaders and armed Marxist rebels as well as local authorities and other groups persecute Christians in central and southern Mexico.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MEXICO: Christian converts are rejected by their community and are often forced from their homes and villages in some rural areas. Large groups of Christians have at times been driven from their homes in the south. Converts and faithful witnesses for Christ lose their jobs, inheritances and land. Those who remain in their communities are marginalized, partly because they will not participate in pagan celebrations that feature drunkenness and debauchery.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: There is little access to Bibles in these isolated communities, and few are available in the indigenous languages.

VOM WORK: VOM distributes Bibles in both Spanish and indigenous languages, provides support for those driven from their homes and communities, and responds to persecution incidents.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 62-63 8/11/26 8:19 AM

MOROCCO

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Morocco is ruled by a monarch who is purportedly a direct descendant of the prophet Muhammad and intends to govern the nation with Islamic principles. The North African country has experienced over 1,100 years of Islamic oppression since Morocco's historic people group, the Berbers, were forced into Islam by invading Arabs in the eighth century. Today, only a fraction of 1 percent of the population is Christian. The growth of Christianity has been slow, with a major setback occurring in 2010 when hundreds of missionaries were forced to leave the country. With the rise of digital technology and social media, more Moroccans are coming to faith in Christ.

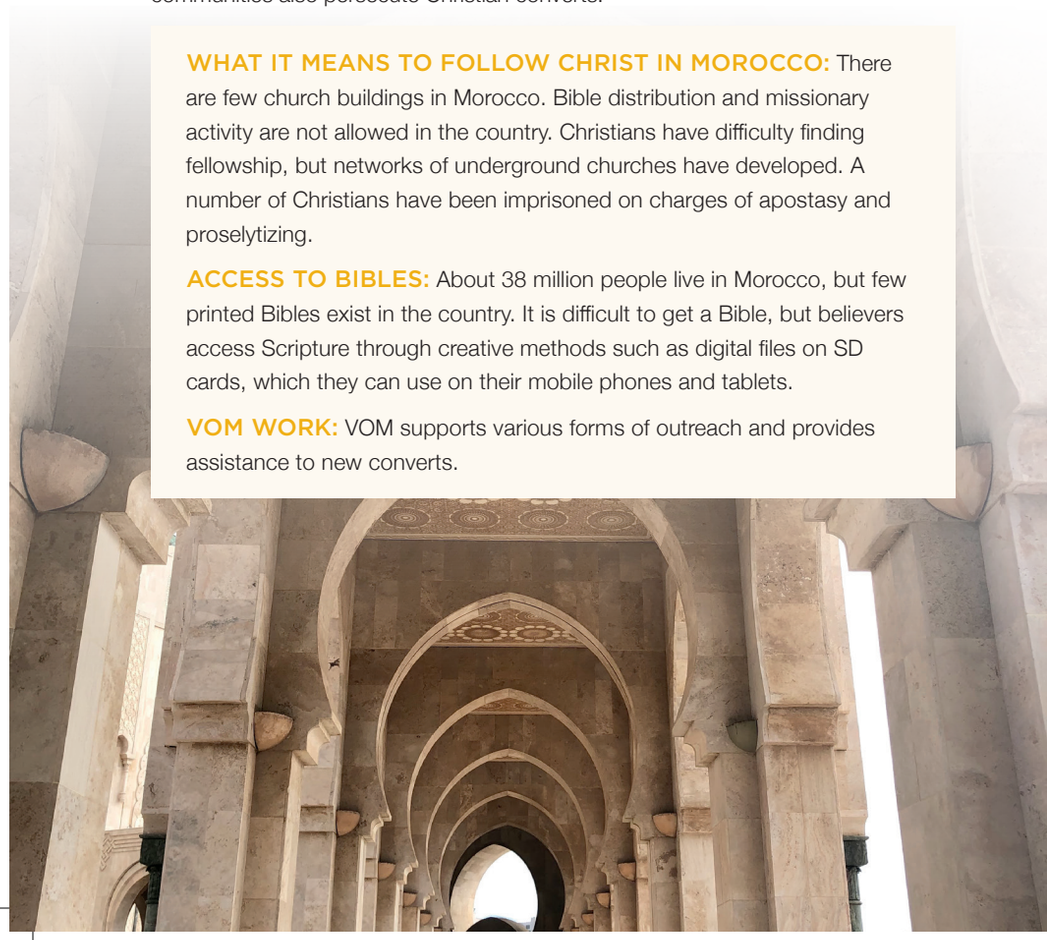
MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Moroccans are Sunni Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: The government is the main persecutor. Family, friends and communities also persecute Christian converts.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MOROCCO: There are few church buildings in Morocco. Bible distribution and missionary activity are not allowed in the country. Christians have difficulty finding fellowship, but networks of underground churches have developed. A number of Christians have been imprisoned on charges of apostasy and proselytizing.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: About 38 million people live in Morocco, but few printed Bibles exist in the country. It is difficult to get a Bible, but believers access Scripture through creative methods such as digital files on SD cards, which they can use on their mobile phones and tablets.

VOM WORK: VOM supports various forms of outreach and provides assistance to new converts.



MOZAMBIQUE



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Mozambique is located along the southeastern coast of Africa. It was colonized by the Portuguese in the 1500s and retains Portuguese as its official language. After gaining independence in 1975, Mozambique became a Communist one-party state backed by the Soviet Union. It suffered a protracted and devastating civil war from 1977 to 1992 that resulted in a governing presidential democracy, but the war decimated the country's economy and infrastructure. Today, Mozambique is among the poorest and most dangerous countries in the world. While the country is majority Christian, the northern provinces are predominantly Muslim. One of these provinces, Cabo Delgado, has endured an Islamic insurgency that began in 2017 with attacks on police stations and government buildings. In 2019, when the insurgents pledged allegiance to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) in Africa, the attacks intensified. The Islamists targeted villages and overran entire towns, eventually controlling most of Cabo Delgado. In 2021, Rwanda and other countries in southern Africa deployed thousands of troops to the province. They have retaken many large cities, but small-scale attacks still occur. More than 700,000 people are still displaced from their homes in Cabo Delgado province.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: The country is majority Christian. About 25 percent hold to traditional ethnic beliefs, and 17 percent are Muslim.

PERSECUTOR: Islamic extremists persecute Christians in the north, while believers face social and community-wide persecution in other Muslim-majority areas.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MOZAMBIQUE: Christians in the northern part of Cabo Delgado, especially pastors, have suffered greatly, and the insurgency has also affected many nominal Muslims. In smaller attacks on rural villages, extremists often separate Christians from other villagers, persecuting the Christians and their children through extremely inhumane and violent methods. Churches and Christians' homes are typically destroyed. The believers who flee

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 64-65 8/11/26 8:19 AM

these attacks are dispersed throughout Mozambique, and many know nothing about the welfare of their family members. Christian converts in other Muslim-majority regions face intense communal persecution and are ostracized from their families after they convert to Christianity.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available but are hard to find in some areas and in some dialects. Since members of many tribal groups are unable to read, audio Bibles in their dialects are highly valued.

VOM WORK: VOM supports Christians who have been targeted in the Cabo Delgado insurgency, providing general relief as well as rebuilding homes and churches for pastors in the region. Working with local Christians, VOM also helps provide audio Bibles to Christians, churches and ministries working in the area.



MYANMAR (BURMA)



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Christian faith in Burma traces its roots to the missionary efforts of Adoniram Judson, who arrived in 1813 with his wife, Ann. The revised Judson Bible translation into Burmese is still the standard used by churches. Most Christians are from the Chin and Karen tribal groups, while relatively few of Myanmar's Burman ethnic majority have come to faith. Myanmar has many Bible schools, even though most are illegal, and indigenous church planters and missionaries boldly proclaim the gospel. Churches are growing despite widespread persecution by the government and the Buddhist majority. The Burman ethnic majority dominates and oppresses the other tribal groups. After a political coup in 2021, political change has been frequently discussed, but only superficial change has occurred, and the military still controls the country.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Most Burman tribal members are Buddhist, while the Chin and Karen people groups identify as Christian and are oppressed by the government. Rohingya Muslims are a small but significant group.

PERSECUTOR: The government, in cooperation with Buddhist monks, is the main persecutor in Myanmar, but local officials and tribal militias also persecute Christians. Families and villagers who practice animism often persecute those who convert to Christianity.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MYANMAR: The widespread, long-running civil war directly affects Christians when they are targeted for attack by the warring factions. Villagers with animistic beliefs take vengeance on Christians, claiming they are angering the local spirits. Church gatherings and church buildings are allowed in many parts of the country, but tolerance varies from state to state. Active believers who share their faith face difficulties. Within tribal groups, families oppose conversion, and new believers are subject to close government monitoring. Buddhist monks have actively opposed new Christian converts and evangelists. Some pastors have been arrested and detained for a few days at a time.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 66-67 8/11/26 8:19 AM

Myanmar (Burma) continued

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles can be purchased and owned legally in small numbers, but most people cannot afford them. While bookstores in large cities sell Bibles, they are unavailable in many regions. To avoid government restrictions, many Burmese Bibles are brought into the country from other countries to meet the need.

VOM WORK: VOM provides materials for the growing church, distributes Bibles and provides training for Christians. We also assist those who are kicked out of their village and face persecution.



NEPAL

DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: The government of Nepal is taking an increasingly strong stand against religious conversion. Despite the 2015 constitution that guaranteed religious freedom, Nepal's parliament criminalized converting someone to another religion. Christian communities are small, but they boldly witness for Christ despite harassment and risk.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 81.3 percent of Nepalis are Hindus. Hinduism is more prominent in the south, along the Indian border, and Buddhism is more prominent in the north. There are small Muslim and Christian minorities as well as a growing Marxist (atheistic communist) movement.

PERSECUTOR: Nepal is a collectivist culture in which significant decisions are made by the head of the family or the community leader; decisions by other individuals are unacceptable and opposed. Families, communities, Marxist groups and Hindu groups pressure Christians, who also experience some government interference. Muslims and Buddhists also persecute Christians, especially in response to evangelism and conversions in rural areas.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN NEPAL: There is a small, visible Christian community in Nepal, but believers experience opposition from extremists among the Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Marxist groups. Christians face false accusations, harassment and beatings from family and communities. They also face opposition from local Hindu nationalists who envision Nepal returning to its former status as a Hindu kingdom. Christians are considered to be untouchables and are ostracized by society. They are seen as people who "destroy culture" and promote foreign religions.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are legal, but many people cannot afford them. There is no access to Bibles in remote areas and villages. Distribution is difficult in Nepal's mountainous areas.

VOM WORK: VOM responds to persecution, distributes Bibles, trains pastors and provides Christian literature and tools for evangelism.



NICARAGUA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Social and political unrest increased in 2018 as a result of the authoritarian rule of President Daniel Ortega and his political party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, which espouses Marxist (atheistic communist) ideology. The government initially targeted the Catholic Church, but beginning in 2023 it expanded its restrictions to all religious organizations, closing hundreds of churches and ministries. The Nicaraguan government has imposed burdensome legal requirements on religious organizations and uses laws relating to cybercrimes and financial crimes to harshly punish religious leaders and close churches and ministries. Christian leaders have been arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned, and some have chosen or been forced into exile in neighboring countries to avoid harsh sentences.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: About 96 percent of Nicaraguans are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The government is the main persecutor in Nicaragua.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN NICARAGUA: Government restrictions on Christian activities came suddenly and harshly in 2022. Evangelism is strictly prohibited, and other outreach activities, such as mission-run clinics in rural villages, must comply with stringent government restrictions that front-line workers report are logistically problematic. The government has also restricted the opening of new churches and any outdoor events in an attempt to curtail church growth. Pastors report that government officials routinely attend services to monitor and intimidate Christians, and efforts are underway to collect personal data on pastors and church members.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in a variety of formats.

VOM WORK: VOM supports front-line workers who have been affected by government restrictions, equipping them to continue their faithful witness to Christ.

NIGER



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: French-speaking Niger is home to about 2.6 million nomadic Tuareg people as well as several million Fulani. Both groups live throughout the Sahara region and are predominantly Muslim, with less than 1 percent Christian. The Fulani in this region have not been as radicalized as they have been in Nigeria. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, and most people are subsistence farmers. Large-scale attacks against Christian communities are infrequent but did occur in 2015, when more than 80 churches throughout the country's southern region were destroyed. More recently, five churches in the Tillaberi region were attacked by Islamists in 2021. The country has been affected by conflicts in Mali and Burkina Faso, where Islamist groups linked to al-Qaida and the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) have attacked border regions to expand their influence in the Sahel. The ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria has pushed Nigerian refugees into Niger, displacing thousands in the southeast.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 93 percent are Muslims, with less than 2 percent Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The primary persecutors are Islamic extremists and community members.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN NIGER: Few Christians live in this heavily Muslim country, but several key Christian leaders are reaching their nation for Christ. Entire villages are placing their faith in Christ when evangelists share the gospel. Islamists from surrounding countries, such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, are attacking Christians inside Niger with increasing frequency. Several villages and other groups in border areas have been displaced from their homes because of these attacks.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in the cities but not in rural areas. Many people are illiterate, and audio Bibles in their dialects are highly desired.

VOM WORK: VOM supports the efforts of several evangelists and other front-line workers who are reaching nomadic groups through Bible distribution (print and audio), discipleship and biblical training, and assistance to persecuted Christians. We also support churches that have been displaced by extremist violence.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 70-71 8/11/26 8:19 AM

NIGERIA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: More than half of Africa's most populous nation (237 million) are Christians, the fruit of both pioneer mission work and freed slaves who returned to the continent from Europe with the gospel following the 1833 abolition of slavery in England. Foreign missionary activity in the north has declined significantly since 2008 as a result of the emergence of the Islamic militant group Boko Haram. Based in the north, Boko Haram is affiliated with al-Qaida and has also aligned itself with the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS). Although Boko Haram has weakened somewhat in the northeast, it still carries out devastating attacks in the Christian communities and on army units in the region. Boko Haram is also reportedly backing ongoing attacks on Christian villages by militant Fulani Muslims, who have concentrated their attacks in the central region of Nigeria. Terrorist groups and other Muslims in the north want to drive Christians out of the region and continue their push to create a separate nation governed by Islamic law.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 51 percent of Nigerians are Christians. The nation is divided between Christians and Sunni Muslims, with most Christians in the south and most Muslims in the north.

PERSECUTOR: The Boko Haram Islamic extremist group and militant Fulani Muslims both attack Christians throughout northern Nigeria.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN NIGERIA: Nearly all Christians in northeastern Nigeria have lost family members or friends in attacks by Boko Haram or militant Fulani Muslims. Entire congregations have been displaced, and many pastors have been forced to leave the region. Being active in church looks much different than it did at the beginning of the 21st century. It now takes great courage and faith to openly worship and serve Christ. Thousands of Christians remain in camps designated for internally displaced people. With few schools able to function because of the violence, families are concerned about their children's education. Life is a constant struggle, and in some places it is difficult for Christians to find food. Famine threatens farms in the north as a result of ongoing Islamist violence, and militant Fulani Muslims kill farmers when they attempt to return to their farms. In addition, many villages and farmlands have been taken over by the Islamist militias.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: While Bibles are plentiful in the south, there is a great need for them in the north. Many Bibles have been lost in attacks and as people have been displaced. Most Christians in the north do not own a Bible, and even if they were available, few in the north could afford them.

VOM WORK: VOM provides assistance to persecuted Christians, supports widows who have lost their husbands in Islamist attacks and trains and equips pastors in the north. We also provide study Bibles, New Testaments and Christian discipleship literature to believers.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 72-73 8/11/26 8:19 AM

NORTH KOREA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: North Korea was once a thriving center of Christian worship. Pyongyang, the capital, was known as "the Jerusalem of the East" in the early 1900s because of its 2,000-plus churches. But decades of rule by an oppressive regime, currently led by Kim Jong Un, have forced Christians to worship in secret. The communist-inspired dictatorship is founded upon Juche, a distinctly North Korean religious ideology that requires worship of and subservience to the Kim family. Christianity is considered subversive and is brutally opposed. Anyone discovered to be a Christian or to have expressed any interest in Christ or the Bible is considered an enemy of the state. The gospel is still proclaimed in North Korea through various creative means, including shortwave radio and bold evangelists who risk their lives to smuggle Bibles and discipleship resources into the country.

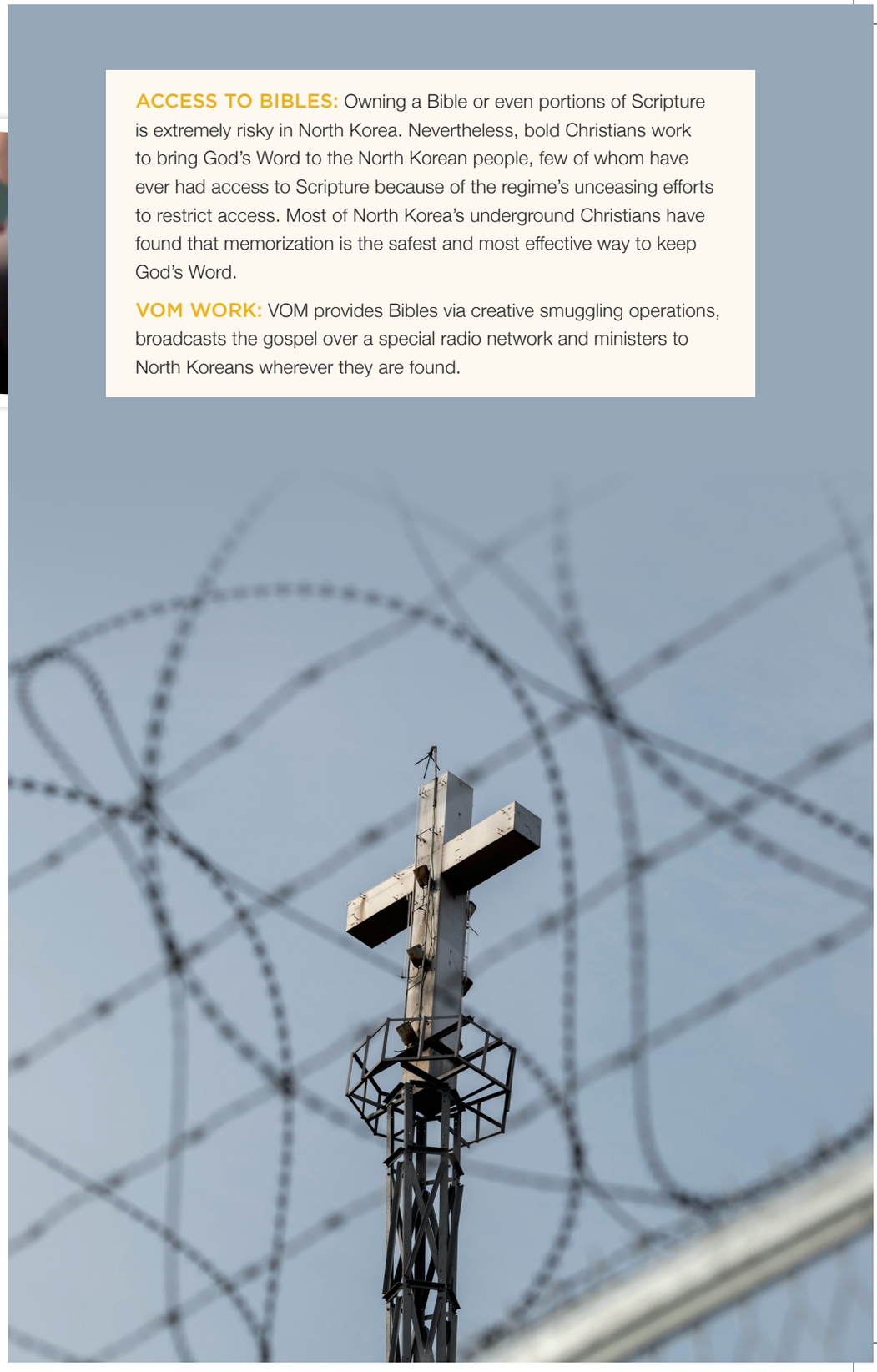
MAJOR RELIGIONS: The North Korean government allows for no religious freedom, requiring all North Koreans to follow the Juche religion.

PERSECUTOR: If discovered, Christians face harsh persecution from the government and from members of the community, who are required to serve as government informants. Even those who are aware of Christian activity but do not report it to the government are punished as enemies of the regime.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN NORTH KOREA: Christians are sent to prison and labor camps, where they are starved, overworked and tortured. The government's requirement that all North Koreans act as informants applies even to families, as children are taught to spy on their parents from a young age. Therefore, North Korean Christians must be extremely careful in what they say, what they do and even how they pray. When a Christian is discovered, the government punishes the entire family in order to encourage reporting on family members. Despite the threat of persecution and heavy social pressure, Christians in North Korea hold firmly to their faith. Christian and secular analysts estimate that about 30,000 Christians are currently suffering in prison and labor camps.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Owning a Bible or even portions of Scripture is extremely risky in North Korea. Nevertheless, bold Christians work to bring God's Word to the North Korean people, few of whom have ever had access to Scripture because of the regime's unceasing efforts to restrict access. Most of North Korea's underground Christians have found that memorization is the safest and most effective way to keep God's Word.

VOM WORK: VOM provides Bibles via creative smuggling operations, broadcasts the gospel over a special radio network and ministers to North Koreans wherever they are found.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 74-75 8/11/26 8:19 AM

OMAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: The Sultanate of Oman is less restrictive than its neighbors on the Arabian Peninsula. While there are a limited number of church buildings, the few Omani Christians in the country usually meet covertly and carefully discuss their faith because of the risk of persecution from family, community and government.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: About 91 percent of Omanis are Muslims, including about 70 percent Ibadi Muslims, with the remainder a mix of Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Of the remaining Omanis, 5 percent are Hindu and 3 percent are Christian.

PERSECUTOR: Family members and communities pressure those who convert from Islam to Christianity, and the government intervenes if Christian converts become well known or are viewed as a source of shame in their community.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN OMAN: Leaving Islam is not a criminal act in Oman, but Christian converts can be harassed through legal challenges. There are few Omani believers, and the risk of persecution is so high that Christian converts must meet in small groups and use caution when sharing their faith. Foreign Christians are permitted to meet, but they are not allowed to meet in homes or to evangelize Omanis.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: The government allows the Bible society to sell Bibles and Christian literature to foreigners inside the country, but not to Omanis. There is only one Christian bookstore, in Oman's capital, but Omanis can easily access digital and audio Bibles online.

VOM WORK: VOM helps with the training of local believers in evangelism and discipleship.

PAKISTAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: All Pakistani Christians face difficulties, discrimination and persecution because of their Christian identity. Some take great risks to witness to Muslims, baptize converts and gather them into churches, and many work tirelessly to equip, encourage and educate Christian youth. Some Christians boldly share the gospel and distribute God's Word in radicalized Muslim neighborhoods and cities, which in some cases are home to Islamic extremist groups like the Taliban. Believers are commonly accused of blasphemy against Islam and arrested. Most Christians are treated as second-class citizens and are forced to work long hours in labor-intensive jobs while being oppressed by schemes that keep them in bondage to their employers. Violence against Christians has also increased in recent years.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Approximately 98 percent of Pakistanis are Sunni and Sufi Muslims. Pakistan underreports its Christian population, so accurate statistics are unavailable. However, there are just over 2.1 million Pakistani Christians, which is nearly 2 percent of the nation's population.

PERSECUTOR: Both Christian converts from Islam and Pakistanis born into Christian families are persecuted by their communities, Islamic extremist groups and the government. Violence against Christians is on the increase.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN PAKISTAN: Because of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, Christians are at constant risk of being falsely accused of blaspheming Islam, the Quran or Muhammad, and they receive harsh punishments when convicted. Street evangelism is legal under Pakistani law, and several bold evangelists take advantage of the opportunity to share the gospel publicly. Many Christians live together in closed neighborhoods known as colonies, which provide a measure of security amid the widespread oppression. Still, several large-scale attacks have occurred in these areas in recent years, including some during Christmas. Most Christians are trapped in a cycle of poor education and poverty. Often, the only jobs they can get

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 76-77 8/11/26 8:19 AM

amount to indentured servitude in brick kilns or as street sweepers or sewage workers. Christians have been imprisoned for years under the country's blasphemy laws, and many of those have been killed or forced to permanently flee the country upon release from prison. Recently, an increased number of teenage girls have been abducted by older Muslim men and forced into Islamic marriages, a practice in which the government remains complicit.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles can be legally printed and distributed in Pakistan. However, some Islamist groups oppose the Bible. Christians living in rural, tribal and mountainous areas have little access to God's Word, and translation efforts are ongoing.

VOM WORK: VOM supports outreach in difficult areas, training for local pastors and evangelists, and immediate aid to victims of persecution. VOM also supports Bible distributions in various formats, with a focus on the most difficult areas.



PHILIPPINES (MINDANAO)

DESIGNATION: Hostile



OVERVIEW: On the island of Mindanao, where Muslim-majority communities dominate the western and southern regions of the island, Islamist groups and the government have engaged in a long-standing conflict over the Islamists' desire to form an independent Muslim state. Groups such as Abu Sayyaf and Maute have pledged allegiance to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) to gain financial help and recruit foreign fighters. Islamic extremists have threatened Christians and driven many out of Muslim-majority areas. Pastors and other believers have been killed in the past. However, a significant number of Christians remain in these areas as they boldly bear witness to Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Most people in the greater Philippines are Christians, but the Mindanao region includes areas with a significant Muslim majority and where Islamic extremism has a strong influence.

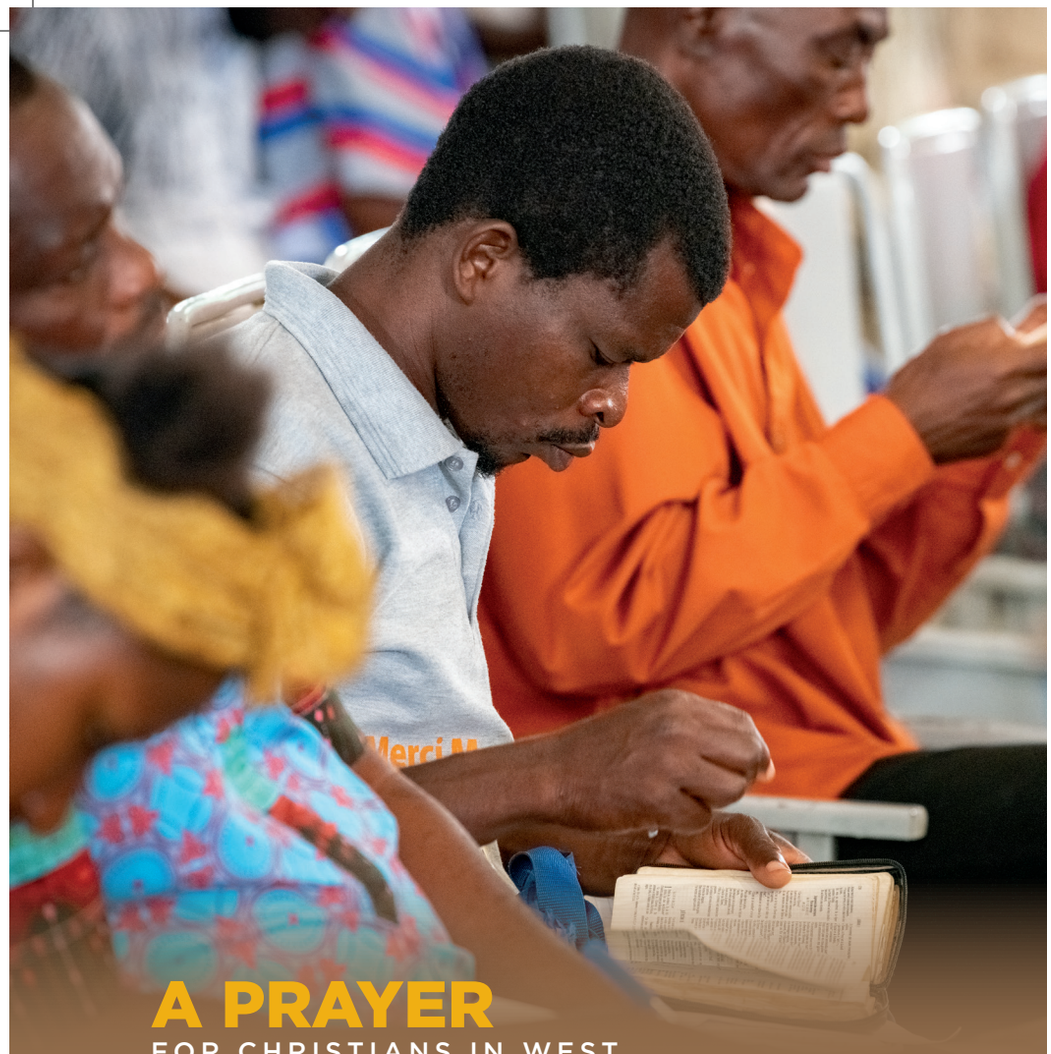
PERSECUTOR: In the Mindanao region, Christians are attacked by both Sunni Muslims and communist rebels.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES: In the western and southern Mindanao region, attacks on Christians are sporadic and unpredictable, creating an environment of constant tension for Christians. Government forces usually respond when conflicts occur, but Christians' rights are not protected in areas where the government has ceded control to Islamists. Churches are legal, and graduates of Bible schools in the Mindanao region boldly share the gospel in Muslim communities.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in cities but are much harder to obtain in remote rural areas.

VOM WORK: VOM responds to attacks on Christians in hostile areas of Mindanao.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 78-79 8/11/26 8:19 AM



A PRAYER

FOR CHRISTIANS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Dear heavenly Father,

We praise you for the inspiring faith of our persecuted Christian family members living in West and Central Africa.

As they face horrific violence from Islamist groups, give them strength to withstand any attacks. When Christians are driven from their homes or killed in Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and elsewhere, provide a place for them and their families to rest.

We ask that you will heal those who have suffered physical and mental pain because of attacks by militant Muslims, voodooists and even their own family members and communities. Comfort them with your Spirit and strengthen them by your presence.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

QATAR



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Qatar had built a reputation for economic development and participation in the world economy, but most Arab countries severed diplomatic relations with the country in 2017, accusing it of supporting terrorist groups, but those relationships have since been restored. The few Qatari believers living inside the country must use extreme caution when gathering for worship, while Christians who are not citizens must worship in a government-controlled compound that is closed to Qatari citizens. About 65 percent of the country's population is composed of foreign workers — mostly Filipinos, Indians and Lebanese — including many who are Christians. Foreign Christians in Qatar have been deported for evangelistic activities among native Qataris.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Qatari nationals are Muslim, and most are Sunni Muslim. Foreign Christians working inside Qatar make up 6 percent of the country's population.

PERSECUTOR: The government and the community persecute those who evangelize and those who leave Islam.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN QATAR:
Converting to Christianity means losing everything, and the small number of Qatari believers must gather covertly for teaching or worship. Although sharing the gospel with Muslims is strictly forbidden, some Christians still take great risks to evangelize Qatari citizens.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Qataris can easily access the Bible through the internet, and some travel to Bahrain to purchase Bibles. It is not illegal to own a Bible, but Qataris take significant risks to own or distribute one.

VOM WORK: VOM provides support to Christian converts from Islam.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 80-81 8/11/26 8:19 AM

RUSSIA (NORTH CAUCASUS)

DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: The North Caucasus region of Russia includes six states that are overwhelmingly Muslim — Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino Balkaria, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan. Those six Muslim-majority states have a population of 7.2 million people and include 45 language groups, the world's most complex grouping in such a small area. For generations, the region has been beset by violent Islamic separatist groups who have committed terrorist attacks in the Caucasus, in other parts of Russia and beyond.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: The six North Caucasus states are 95 percent Muslim. Only 2.3 percent of the population of those states are Christian.

PERSECUTOR: Across these six North Caucasus states, those who convert to Christianity face harsh treatment from their family members and community. In Chechnya and Dagestan, the local semi-autonomous government enforces Islamic practice without tolerance or exception.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN RUSSIA: To be a Christian in the North Caucasus region means to be persecuted. The region has been Islamic for centuries, and being Muslim is closely tied to local identities. Around a dozen of the people groups do not have a single known follower of Christ. In other parts of Russia, Christians who are viewed as a threat to the regime are legally restricted in several activities of their faith, especially evangelism. While the Putin regime hasn't yet used these laws to severely persecute Christians in Russia, there is great concern at how ideologies, such as the "Russian World" (*Russkiy Mir*), that lead to persecution are being purported by the media portrayals, government and senior Russian Orthodox Church leaders. Some Christians with connections to the West have been targeted for persecution, while Russian Christians who do not oppose the regime still meet openly in their churches.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Russian-language Bibles are available in the region but not widely distributed. Several people groups do not have a Bible available in their native language.

VOM WORK: VOM supports Christians who have been rejected by their families for coming to faith in Christ. VOM also equips front-line workers advancing the gospel in the North Caucasus region.

SAUDI ARABIA

DESIGNATION: Restricted



OVERVIEW: Islam originated in Saudi Arabia approximately 1,400 years ago, and the religion's founder, Muhammad, declared that no other religion should exist on the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia is also home to the Islamic city of Mecca, where pilgrims journey to complete their *Hajj*, one of the religion's five pillars. Because of its prominence in Islam, Saudi Arabia has long been foundational to both the Islamic faith and Islamic extremism. However, in recent years, the government led by Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman Al Saud has begun a process of modernizing the nation, creating a new openness to American and Western European tourists and businesses. The government's reforms have included limits on the activity of its oppressive "religious police" and relaxed laws that have long restricted women's freedom to work and travel. Many Saudis have come to know Christ through digital media, travel abroad and exposure to faithful Christians inside and outside the country. Some Saudis are disillusioned by Islam and are more open to the gospel than ever before. While many are working to reach locals with the gospel, many more workers are needed.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Saudi nationals are Sunni Muslims, with a small population of Shiites. Because of the many foreign workers in the country, 4 percent of the population is Christian.

PERSECUTOR: Families, communities and the government severely persecute Christian converts from Islam and work to restrict evangelism and Bible distribution.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SAUDI ARABIA: Saudi Arabia is one of the world's most restricted and difficult environments for Christians, especially those who convert from Islam. One church has been allowed for foreign Christian workers, but no other churches are permitted. Conversions from Islam are considered apostasy by law and are punishable by death. But Saudis who convert

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 82-83 8/11/26 8:19 AM

are more likely to be killed by family members than to be imprisoned or otherwise punished by the government.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Many Saudis are creatively accessing Scripture through the internet and other digital media.

VOM WORK: VOM covertly helps seekers and provides aid to Christian converts from Islam.



SIERRA LEONE



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Sierra Leone has been listed as one of the poorest countries on earth, its economic development hindered by a brutal civil war that raged in the country from 1991 into the early 2000s. Much of the country, particularly the north, lacks electricity and modern necessities and has an extremely high illiteracy rate believed to be around 40 percent. Persecution is associated with tribal violence and the rise of radical Islam. Despite identifying publicly with a particular religion, an estimated 90 percent of Sierra Leoneans are aligned with secret societies that dominate all aspects of life in the country. These societies practice demonic rituals that include bodily mutilation of society members and the killing of humans.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 61 percent of Sierra Leoneans are Muslim and 13 percent are Christian. 24 percent follow tribal religions.

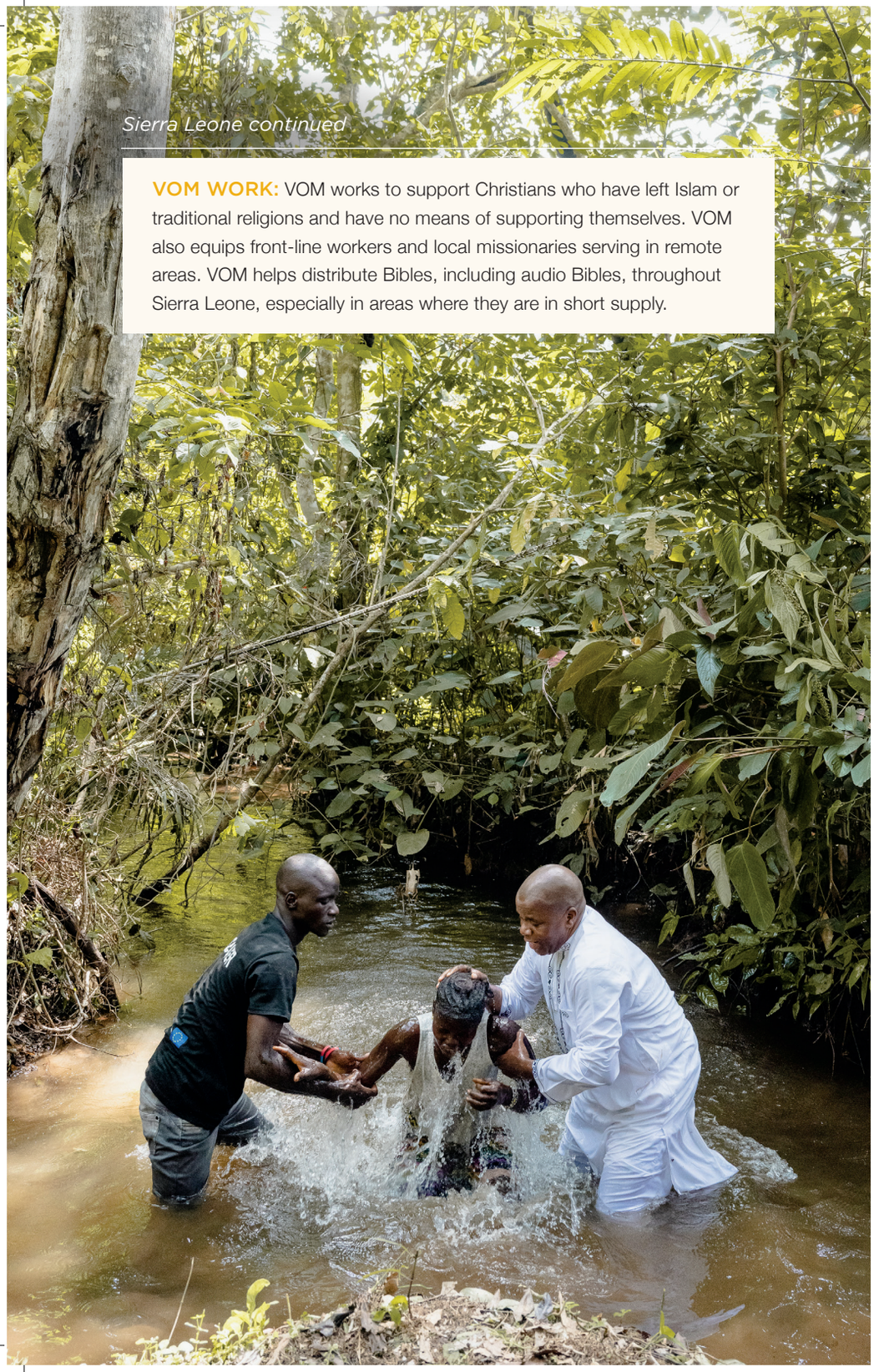
PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted by Muslims, tribal groups and secret society members.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SIERRA LEONE:
In southern Sierra Leone, Christians can meet and worship freely. But in the north and in remote rural areas, Christians regularly face persecution. Secret societies violently persecute Christians who convert from traditional religions and Islam. When Christians leave secret societies, the entire community often opposes them, threatens them and forces them to flee. Some have been brutally attacked and even killed for their faith. In some places, secret societies wield great influence over local government officials who may make life difficult for Christians.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in the capital but too expensive for most Sierra Leoneans. They are not available at all in most rural villages, especially in the north. Because of the very high illiteracy rate, audio Bibles are an important and effective way to spread God's Word in Sierra Leone.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 84-85 8/11/26 8:19 AM



Sierra Leone continued

VOM WORK: VOM works to support Christians who have left Islam or traditional religions and have no means of supporting themselves. VOM also equips front-line workers and local missionaries serving in remote areas. VOM helps distribute Bibles, including audio Bibles, throughout Sierra Leone, especially in areas where they are in short supply.

SOMALIA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Most Somalis believe that to be Somali is to be Muslim, so those who come to faith in Christ are accused of rejecting not only their religion but also their nationality. After years of drought and civil war, more Somalis live outside Somalia than within its borders, and Somalis often take their Islamist cultural norms with them wherever they go. Therefore, those who faithfully serve Christ or convert from Islam in Somali communities throughout the world face severe persecution regardless of national laws. Even so, the dispersion of Somali people has also created unique opportunities to reach them with the gospel. Somalis are more reachable and open than ever before, and many have chosen to follow Christ, including some who are willing to reach out to other Somalis at any cost.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Somalis are Sunni Muslims, and most hold especially radicalized views.

PERSECUTOR: The al-Shabab terrorist organization and other Islamist groups persecute Christians, as do the government, communities and families.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SOMALIA:
There are no church buildings in Somalia, and Christians must exercise extreme care when meeting in groups. It is strictly illegal to convert or evangelize. Christians are actively pursued, and when discovered they are immediately killed. Christians are more likely to be killed by al-Shabab or family members than to be imprisoned by the government. The autonomous region of Somaliland has seen a recent increase in the number of underground Christians being arrested.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are illegal, and it is extremely dangerous to own one. Most believers access digital versions on their phones or other digital devices.

VOM WORK: VOM equips believers and supports those who share their faith inside Somalia. VOM also supports media efforts that reach inside the country.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 86-87 8/11/26 8:19 AM

SOUTH SUDAN

DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Prior to 2011, South Sudan was part of Sudan, its neighbor to the north. After Sudan gained independence from British control in the early 1950s, Sudanese leaders began a brutal campaign to Islamize the nation. Most of southern Sudan's population opposed this effort, which led to decades of civil war. Christian missionary efforts in the 19th century resulted in a predominantly Christian population in South Sudan, but there is still a significant population who follow tribal religions that oppose Christianity. As Islamists continue to push their influence farther south in this region of Africa, Christians in South Sudan have been targeted and killed, especially along the border with Sudan.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 63 percent of people in South Sudan are Christian. Approximately 27 percent follow ethnic religions, and 9 percent are Muslim.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted by Muslims and those who follow tribal religions.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SOUTH SUDAN: Christians can practice their faith freely in some areas of South Sudan. In the border region with Sudan, conflict arises with Muslims who have fled from the north and are occupying camps for internally displaced people alongside Christians. Christians in the camps are rejected, and their access to aid is restricted. Christian converts from Islam are also opposed by their Muslim families. In regions dominated by tribal religions, Christians are violently targeted by tribal leaders.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: While Bibles are readily available, regional instability, violence and poor infrastructure can make distributions difficult in some parts of the country.

VOM WORK: VOM provides basic necessities to displaced Christian families who have fled from the north. VOM also supports Christian converts from Islam who have been rejected by their families.

A PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIANS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

Dear heavenly Father,

Thank you for the fellowship we have with our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ in the Asia Pacific.

When Communist governments in countries like China, Laos and Vietnam harass, interrogate and imprison Christians, may our Christian brothers and sisters stand firm in their faith. And may all attempts to silence the witness of persecuted Christians fail.

Strengthen and encourage new Christian converts in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, where those who leave Islam face severe persecution from their governments and communities. Grant boldness to evangelists and pastors who share the gospel at great risk.

May all believers in the Asia Pacific always rejoice in you, submitting their anxieties and fears to you in prayer, with thanksgiving. And may your Holy Spirit bring them great peace to guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 88-89 8/11/26 8:19 AM

SRI LANKA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: The island nation of Sri Lanka, off the southeastern coast of India, has never fully recovered from a civil war between Buddhist and Hindu factions that ended more than a decade ago. The government has put significant efforts into resettling those displaced during the conflict between the majority-Buddhist Sinhalese population and the Hindu Tamil separatists. There are strong churches in the country as well as parachurch organizations that provide Bible training, theological education and missions training. Churches in Sri Lanka are actively sending missionaries to other countries in South Asia.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Roughly 68 percent of Sri Lankans are Buddhist, 12 percent Hindu, 10 percent Muslim and 7 percent Christian. The north of the country is majority Hindu and the south majority Buddhist. Christians are a persecuted minority in both areas.

PERSECUTOR: Buddhists are the primary persecutors, sometimes led by Buddhist monks who openly stir up communities against the Christians who live among them. Hindus also oppose evangelism and conversion to Christianity.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SRI LANKA: Christians can openly gather and worship in Sri Lanka, but the government is now pressuring all churches to officially register. Local governments sometimes participate in attacks on pastors and churches. Despite the threats and attacks, churches are strongly engaged in church-planting and missionary-sending activities.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: There is a Bible society in Sri Lanka, and Bibles are readily available except in the most difficult areas.

VOM WORK: VOM supports training for missionaries, pastors and church planters and provides Bibles and resources in difficult and underserved areas.

SUDAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: For nearly 50 years, the Sudanese government has conducted a brutal campaign to Islamize the nation, destroying churches and imprisoning Christians while seeking to implement strict adherence to Islamic law. Until recently, the Islamization campaign also included the bombing of villages, crops, hospitals and churches. The Sudanese government seeks to exterminate both Christians and ethnically African people in the contested Nuba Mountain, Blue Nile and Darfur regions on its border with South Sudan. The Islamist dictator and convicted war criminal Omar al-Bashir, who led Sudan's assault on Christians, was removed from power in 2019 by a military council controlled by the country's Islamist establishment, and the nation remains unstable as multiple Islamist factions fight for control. In April 2023, growing tensions between two of al-Bashir's former generals, ardent Islamists who participated in the 2019 coup, led to fighting in the streets of Khartoum. Since then, the Islamists have targeted and killed Christians and attacked churches.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 90 percent of the Sudanese people are Sunni Muslims. 5 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The Sudanese government has intimidated, arrested, imprisoned and tortured Christians.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SUDAN: In times of peace, Sudanese Christians have been able to attend church openly, but Christian leaders are detained and sometimes imprisoned if their activities are viewed as threatening Islam. Most Christians who have not fled the current violence must meet underground in small groups.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: As a result of the regime's long-standing campaign to Islamize the country, Bibles and Christian literature have become scarce. However, there are concerted efforts to inundate the country with Bibles during this time of political upheaval.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 90-91 8/11/26 8:19 AM

VOM WORK: VOM supports Bible-importation efforts and evangelism in the north while providing crisis response (such as clean water and medical aid) to Christians in conflict areas, especially the Nuba Mountain region of South Kordofan state. VOM also supports Bible distribution efforts as well as providing basic necessities to children of displaced Christian families who have fled to neighboring countries.



SYRIA



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Syrian Christians' lives have been severely disrupted by the civil war that began in 2011. Caught in the crossfire in this brutal conflict between Muslim factions, believers have been abused and attacked from all sides. More than 750,000 Christians have been driven from the country. The churches and believers that have been able to remain in Syria have served as a beacon of hope and a source of peace for both Christians and Muslims throughout the war. Many Muslims have come to Christ as Christians have reached out with acts of compassion and practical assistance. Since the fall of the government of Bashar al-Assad in 2024, reports that neighboring countries may send Syrian refugees back to Syria have given believers hope that those who came to faith in nearby countries will return and strengthen local churches.

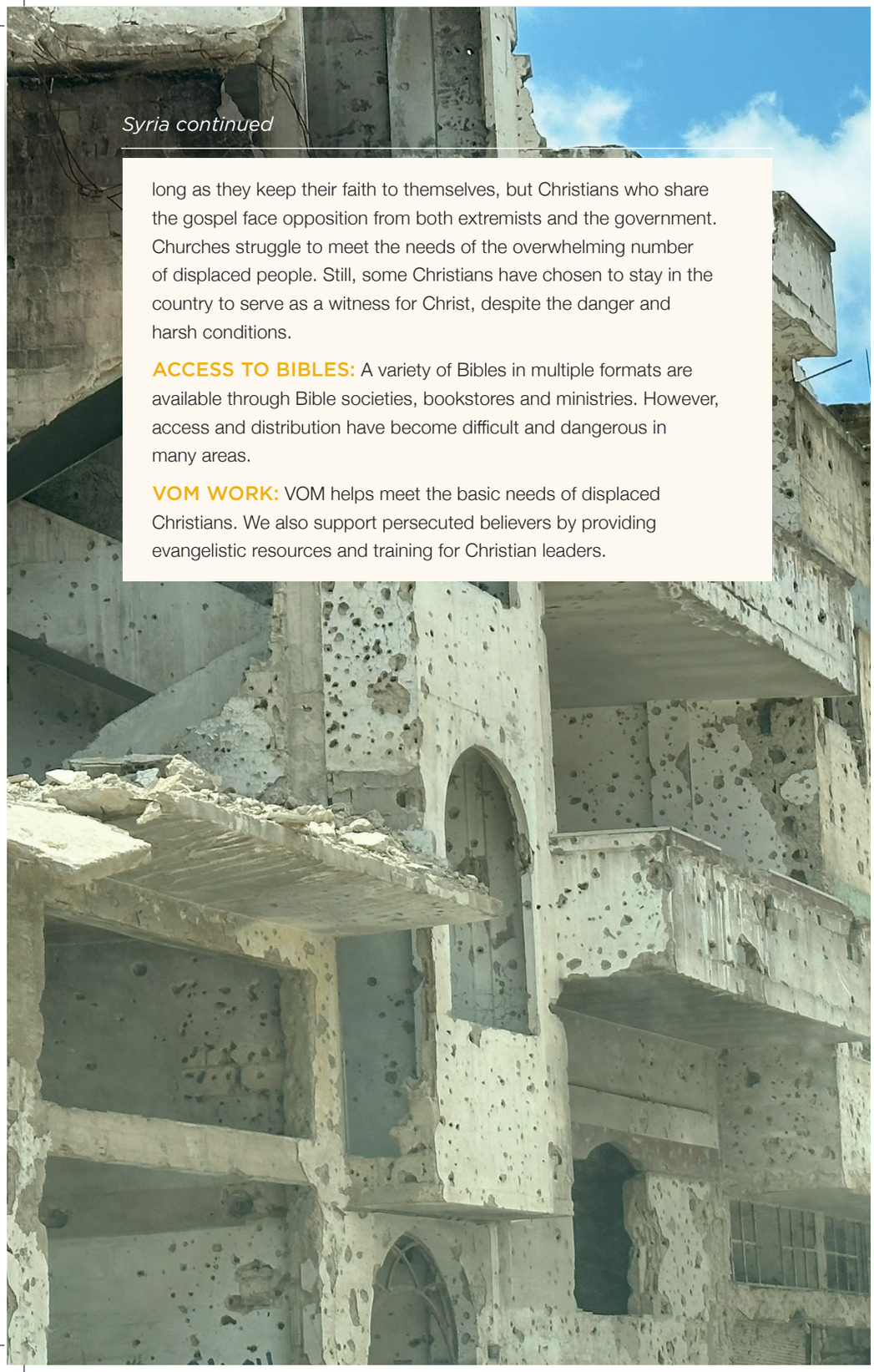
MAJOR RELIGIONS: Sunni Muslims compose about 75 percent of Syria's population. Christians, who have historically made up about 10 percent of the population, have significantly decreased in number since the outset of the war, with many seeking refuge in neighboring countries.

PERSECUTOR: With the fall of the Syrian government, Islamist groups continue their efforts to drive Christians out of Syria through acts of hostility, persecution and violence. While Muslim communities, in general, can be hostile to Christians, severe persecution usually comes from the Islamist groups. Recent attacks on Christians have heightened fears, leaving the Christian community uncertain about its future, particularly in light of overt signs and acts of Islamization under the current government.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN SYRIA: Syria was once known for religious tolerance, relative to most nations in the Middle East. However, in recent years, Syrian Christians have faced the same restrictions and opposition that are common in the region's more restricted Islamist nations. Christians commonly suffer the loss of jobs, homes, social standing and family relationships. Those born into Christian families are able to worship freely in church buildings as

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 92-93 8/11/26 8:19 AM



Syria continued

long as they keep their faith to themselves, but Christians who share the gospel face opposition from both extremists and the government. Churches struggle to meet the needs of the overwhelming number of displaced people. Still, some Christians have chosen to stay in the country to serve as a witness for Christ, despite the danger and harsh conditions.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: A variety of Bibles in multiple formats are available through Bible societies, bookstores and ministries. However, access and distribution have become difficult and dangerous in many areas.

VOM WORK: VOM helps meet the basic needs of displaced Christians. We also support persecuted believers by providing evangelistic resources and training for Christian leaders.

TAJIKISTAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Most churches in Tajikistan have been forced to meet covertly for more than a decade, following the revocation of their registration. Economic hardship in the nation has forced many pastors and church leaders to seek work in Russia to support their families. Tajikistan lacks basic infrastructure, and its difficulties are compounded by corruption and the opium trade. The country has experienced an influx of refugees from Afghanistan and has the Taliban at its border.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Tajiks are Sunni Muslims. Less than 1 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam are persecuted by family members, and unregistered churches are increasingly harassed by the government.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TAJIKISTAN: New Christian converts receive the harshest treatment. Believers are sometimes beaten and abused, and they are frequently summoned for questioning by the secret police. Many churches meet openly, but government informants are often in attendance. It is illegal to teach children about Christ. The government restricts evangelism and the distribution of Christian literature, which it considers “extremist literature.” Still, many have left Islam to follow Christ in recent years despite the extreme opposition.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available only in select cities, making them scarce and difficult for some believers to access.

VOM WORK: VOM supports local churches, which often face government pressure. We also provide Bibles, Christian literature and ministry tools to equip believers for outreach.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 94-95 8/11/26 8:19 AM

TANZANIA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Though the Tanzanian government generally seeks to protect Christians from persecution, they still face significant opposition in Muslim-majority areas along the coast and in western regions. Tanzania is also home to many unreached tribal groups who are resistant to the gospel. Like many countries in Africa, Tanzania is being targeted by Muslim groups outside the country that work to Islamize Tanzania by establishing Muslim businesses and schools, helping Muslims get elected to office and passing laws that favor Islam. Even so, local churches in Tanzania boldly work to spread the gospel.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 51 percent of Tanzanians are Christians; however, 99 percent of those living in the Zanzibar archipelago, along Tanzania's coast, are Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: Christians are persecuted by community members and organized Islamist groups in Muslim-majority areas.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TANZANIA: Christians can freely practice their faith, but they are oppressed and harassed in predominantly Muslim areas. Persecution ranges from family pressure to the burning of churches and homes. On the island of Zanzibar, the local government works to quietly close churches, prevent the establishment of new ones and force pastors to leave. Persecution is more overt on the island of Pemba, where Christians are violently attacked. In the predominantly Muslim areas, Christians, especially converts from Islam, are often ostracized by their communities and prevented from obtaining jobs.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are readily available in most areas, but they can be difficult for believers to obtain in remote, predominantly Muslim areas.

VOM WORK: VOM provides Bibles and supports Christians who are attacked or rejected because of their faith.

TOGO



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Togo is a small West African nation located between Ghana and Benin on the Atlantic coast. Large, thriving churches exist in the nation's capital, Lome, but the Christian population decreases and the Muslim population increases toward the northern part of the country. In northern Togo, wealthy Arab nations have supported development such as water wells and the construction of new mosques, and Islamist groups from neighboring Burkina Faso are also active in the north.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Christians compose 45 percent of Togo's population of just under 10 million people, while 38 percent practice ethnic religions and 16 percent are Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: In the central and southern parts of Togo, the main persecutors are voodoo practitioners and those who practice traditional spiritism. In the north, the sources of persecution are Muslim families and Islamist groups.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TOGO: Outside of the capital, Christians are opposed by those who follow traditional religions and by Muslims. In the predominantly Muslim north, Christian converts from Islam have been rejected and threatened by their families. In some places, Muslims have disrupted church services by throwing rocks at church buildings. Some Christians have also been denied access to water wells paid for by Muslim groups. In areas of the south, where voodooism and spiritism are common, churches have been burned and Christians attacked. Still, persecution has not stopped churches in the south from sending Togolese missionaries to other parts of the country.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in the capital, but they can be difficult to find and are often prohibitively expensive for those living outside of Lome. Illiteracy rates are higher in the northern part of the country, where audio Bibles are an effective and much-needed tool.

VOM WORK: Churches are well established in southern Togo, and VOM assists them with Bible distributions and support for persecuted Togolese Christians.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 96-97 8/11/26 8:19 AM

TUNISIA

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Tunisia has a rich Christian history. It was the home of notable church fathers Tertullian and Cyprian as well as the Christian martyrs Perpetua and Felicity. The third Council of Carthage ratified the New Testament canon in Tunisia in A.D. 397. However, there are now few churches or Christians in Tunisia. Since the Arab Spring uprising, which began in Tunisia, the country has grown increasingly democratic; the Tunisian government became the first in North Africa to enact religious-freedom reforms. But even with a rich Christian history and increased religious freedom, the gospel is opposed by many Muslims and has been slow to take root in modern Tunisia.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 99 percent of Tunisians are Sunni Muslims. Less than 1 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Christian converts from Islam and Christians who share the gospel suffer persecution from their communities, family members and coworkers.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TUNISIA:
Although the government has begun to implement certain religious-freedom reforms, change will take time in a Tunisian culture that has long been dominated by Islam. Some churches function openly, and Christian converts from Islam are free to worship in them, but open evangelism remains illegal. And while it is illegal for families to persecute their family members who leave Islam, such persecution still happens, and local governments still harass Christians. In rural areas, more severe persecution continues, as Muslim families feel shamed by family members who leave Islam.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles were readily available in the past, but today access is limited and Bibles are now scarce. It is possible to distribute and ship small numbers of Bibles with official permission.

VOM WORK: VOM responds to persecution and provides training and resources for front-line workers.

TURKIYE (TURKEY)



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Turks are proud of their nation, which has seen rapid industrial growth and modernization. Unfortunately, Islam is considered by most Turks to be part of their national identity; it is hard for them to imagine leaving Islam even if they know little about its teachings and do not practice its tenets. Christians in Turkiye have limited freedom of worship. While there are few Turkish churches, believers boldly share Christ with their countrymen. Ongoing changes in Turkiye's government have limited missionary activity and increased pressure on the small Christian community.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 96 percent of Turks are Sunni Muslims who view Islam as a core part of their identity, even though most are not devout. Fewer than 1 percent of Turks are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: Believers face a range of challenges from family members, neighbors, employers and the government. It is not uncommon for the government to assign police officers to a pastor or church for "protection" from threats by Islamic leaders. This is a way to monitor the activities of pastors and churches.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TURKIYE:
Pastors have been targeted in sophisticated assassination plots, and a missionary was murdered in 2019. Another missionary and two Turkish believers were brutally murdered in a highly publicized 2007 incident. Evangelism faces significant opposition in Turkiye, and Christian converts from Islam are harassed and pressured from all sides. Believers are opposed by their families, communities and all levels of government. Mature expatriate believers — many of whom have lived in Turkiye for decades — have long served in Turkish churches; however, the Turkish government has recently targeted these foreign workers for expulsion.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles can be legally distributed in Turkiye, but there are few distribution points.

continued on next page

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 98-99 8/11/26 8:19 AM

VOM WORK: VOM responds to persecution and supports front-line workers' Bible-distribution and church-planting efforts, especially in remote and unreached areas.



TURKMENISTAN

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Turkmenistan is a profoundly restricted country in which Christian worship is limited to churches that are part of government-sanctioned denominations. Despite the restrictions, the gospel is proclaimed regularly through media and personal testimonies. Although Turkmenistan has a long history of isolation and dictatorship, the country has prospered economically because of its natural gas reserves and access to the Caspian Sea.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 94 percent of Turkmen are Sunni Muslims. Almost 4 percent are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The government persecutes Christians outside government-sanctioned denominations.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN TURKMENISTAN: Churches are closely monitored, and Christians' homes may be raided at any time by authorities searching for Christian literature. Some families worship together in secret. If the government learns of a Turkmen becoming a Christian, the new believer faces immediate harassment and pressure. It is also difficult for believers to travel outside the country for Christian training or encouragement.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: A Turkmen-language Bible has been published, but the government has declared it illegal and it is difficult to obtain.

VOM WORK: VOM helps families of imprisoned pastors and distributes Christian literature throughout the country.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 100-101 8/11/26 8:19 AM

UGANDA



DESIGNATION: Hostile

OVERVIEW: Uganda is a majority-Christian nation with many active churches. However, Uganda's history has made it particularly vulnerable to the influence of Islam. During the 1970s, Uganda was ruled by the dictator Idi Amin, who was inspired by Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi to join the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and to begin Islamization of the country. Many of Amin's policies continue to influence society and government today. Uganda's parliament has passed Islamic banking laws, which favor Islamic projects. Arab countries also continue to invest significant resources into furthering Muslim interests in the country. Radical Islam's influence has grown steadily, and many Christians within the Muslim-majority border regions are facing severe persecution, especially those who convert from Islam. Despite the risks, many churches in Uganda have responded by reaching out to their neighbors, training leaders how to share the gospel with Muslims and caring for those who are persecuted after they become Christians.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 84 percent of Ugandans are Christians, and 14 percent are Muslims.

PERSECUTOR: Local Islamists persecute Christians, especially along the eastern, southwestern and northern borders, where radicals have been steadily encroaching.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN UGANDA:

Christian converts from Islam face pressure from family members and harassment in Muslim communities. Several young people who converted to Christianity have been severely beaten and injured by their parents or community members. Pastors and churches have been attacked, and some converts have been killed after their faith became known. The children of families who leave Islam are no longer welcome at school. In some areas, local laws are passed to limit the spread of Christianity or seize church land.

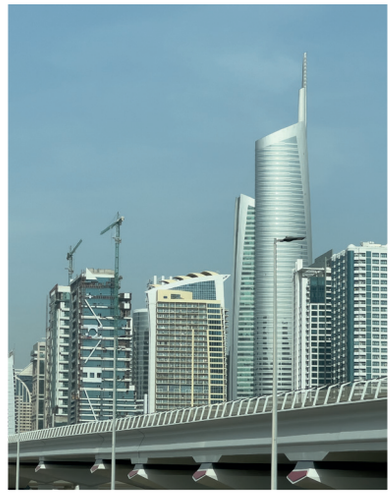
ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are available in urban areas, but most people in rural areas do not have access to them or cannot afford them. In addition, many tribal dialects are spoken in rural areas of Uganda, and literacy rates are low among older members of the population.

VOM WORK: VOM supports the distribution of print and audio Bibles in areas with a heavy Muslim influence and helps believers who have been attacked, threatened or ostracized because of their Christian faith. VOM is also sponsoring conferences in central Uganda to inform Christians of encroaching Islamization and to empower churches and pastors to continue standing for Christ in the face of radical Islamic activity while caring for Christian converts from Islam.



2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 102-103 8/11/26 8:19 AM

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: There are few known Christians among Emirati Arabs. But many foreign-national workers, who compose a significant segment of the country's population, are Christians. Foreigners are allowed personal religious freedom but not the freedom to share their faith with Muslims. Similarly, churches cannot share the gospel with Muslims or do anything that the government views as undermining its power and control. Although it can be difficult to form close relationships with Emirati families, Christian workers faithfully reach out to them and the many migrants from restricted nations living in the UAE, including Pakistanis, Iranians and Afghans.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Emiratis are Sunni Muslims. However, the population includes foreign workers from numerous nations, and many are Christians.

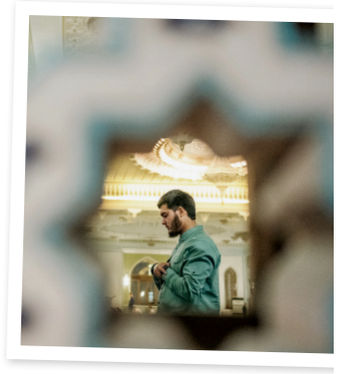
PERSECUTOR: Emirati Christian converts from Islam are persecuted primarily by their immediate family members, and the government restricts evangelism.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Only a few Emiratis are known to have converted from Islam to Christianity. While they enjoy a degree of freedom in meeting covertly for worship, they lose their jobs, homes, spouses and children if their faith is discovered. Christian converts can also be prosecuted for apostasy, which is considered a crime.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: People in the UAE have access to the Bible through the internet, various churches and expatriate Christian workers in the country.

VOM WORK: VOM provides support to Christian converts from Islam and supports follow-up work for Arabic-language outreach in the country.

UZBEKISTAN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Uzbekistan has long been a highly restricted country, though its government made incremental reforms in religious freedom in recent years. Unity among believers across several Christian denominations and a focus on training and equipping Christian leaders have been positive developments for the small number of Uzbek churches and Christians. Still, it remains illegal to distribute evangelistic literature in public. In addition, on Feb. 21, 2025, a law was passed introducing fines of more than a month's wages and up to 15 days in jail for parents who teach or allow their children to receive any illegal (non-government-approved) religious education before the age of 18. The government also requires that every book in the country have a code indicating that it is authorized by the government.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: 83 percent of Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims. 2 percent are Christians. Many are irreligious as a result of suffering under decades of atheistic Communist rule prior to the fall of the Soviet Union.

PERSECUTOR: The government gives families tacit approval to reject other family members who become Christians, or to try to force them back to Islam.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN UZBEKISTAN: Converts from Islam are persecuted by their families, communities and sometimes by the government. Christians outside the Orthodox denomination are considered religious extremists and have been fined and detained for holding worship services, which the government sometimes considers to be illegal religious activity. Orthodox churches meet openly and legally, but most other Christians meet in unregistered groups. Uzbekistan's government once routinely imprisoned Christians, but in recent years even fines and short detentions have become very rare.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles are difficult to obtain and can be risky for some Christians to possess.

VOM WORK: VOM distributes Christian literature and equips pastors and evangelists with ministry tools that expand their outreach and other ministry work.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 104-105 8/11/26 8:19 AM

VIETNAM



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Vietnam has a repressive Communist government that actively restricts Christian worship in many ways. While Christian worship is legal, the government views Christians and churches as a threat to its power and control. Minority tribal groups, such as the Hmong, generally face the most violent and harsh forms of persecution, while Christians in urban centers experience pressure and harassment instead of violent opposition. Churches continue to grow as believers faithfully reach out despite these challenges.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Most Vietnamese people practice a blend of ancestor worship and Buddhism. Roughly 10 percent of the population are Christians.

PERSECUTOR: The government imposes some restrictions, while local authorities and community members violently persecute Christians in rural areas. Christian converts are persecuted by family members.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN VIETNAM: New Christians in tribal areas are often evicted from their homes and villages by local authorities. Officially recognized churches are harassed by the government and are expected to report their activities and teachings to the government. All churches face government opposition when they evangelize and attempt to conduct community events. Within rural and tribal areas, believers can often meet openly, but Christian converts are targeted with harsh persecution. Some Christians are denied social services, utilities and access to schools.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: It is legal to own a Vietnamese-language Bible, but some tribal-language Bibles are heavily restricted.

VOM WORK: VOM responds to persecution and provides training for pastors and believers. We also distribute Bibles to tribal Christians and provide ministry tools for front-line workers.

WESTERN SAHARA

DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: Western Sahara is a disputed territory and former Spanish colony located along northwest Africa's Atlantic coast south of Morocco. Spain relinquished control of Western Sahara in 1975, and Morocco has governed most of the territory since 1976. About 20 percent of Western Sahara, along its eastern and southern border, is controlled by a politico-military organization of the Sahrawi people called the Polisario Front. The Moroccan Army and Polisario Front battled for control of the territory until a ceasefire was brokered in 1991. Today the area is divided by a 1,700-mile-long, heavily mined sand-berm border constructed and patrolled by Moroccan military forces.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Western Sahara is more than 99.9 percent Muslim, making it one of the most religiously homogenous places in the world.

PERSECUTOR: The government is the main persecutor. Family, friends and communities also persecute Christian converts.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN WESTERN SAHARA: Unlike the relatively open tourist destinations found in parts of the Kingdom of Morocco, Western Sahara is restricted and closely monitored by Moroccan government authorities. Christians are under tight scrutiny, and Bible distributions and missionary activities are forbidden. The small number of indigenous Christians living in Western Sahara are at ongoing risk of imprisonment for apostasy and proselytization. While two Catholic churches remain from the period of Spanish control, no other churches are known to exist in either the Moroccan or Polisario Front sections of Western Sahara.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: About 565,000 people live in Western Sahara, but few printed Bibles exist in the country. It is difficult to get a Bible there, but believers can access God's Word through creative methods such as digital files on SD cards, which they can use on their mobile phones and tablets.

VOM WORK: VOM supports various forms of outreach in Western Sahara.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 106-107 8/11/26 8:19 AM

YEMEN



DESIGNATION: Restricted

OVERVIEW: For many years, the people of Yemen have suffered from civil wars and violence from Islamic extremists, including al-Qaida. Although the situation has further deteriorated since the start of the most recent civil war, the gospel has flourished, and many Yemeni Muslims have come to know Christ. Yemeni Christians have become bolder in their outreach efforts, though it is still extremely dangerous to be identified as a Christian. They must reach out in creative ways that are both bold and wise. Small but steady numbers of Yemenis are continually being added to the body of Christ, and more are gaining interest as the influence of Christian media grows. Most regions of the country include at least one follower of Christ.

MAJOR RELIGIONS: Nearly all Yemenis are Muslim, about one-third Shiite and two-thirds Sunni, both of which are represented by warring factions that divide the country. Christians in Yemen account for only a small fraction of 1 percent of the population.

PERSECUTOR: Persecutors include the government, Islamic extremist groups, communities, tribes and families of Christian converts.

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN YEMEN: Converting to Christianity from Islam is a crime punishable by death, and families consider it extremely shameful for a family member to become a Christian. Christian converts face harassment, the possibility of losing jobs and family relationships, and potentially death. Christians worship secretly in homes or in small groups outdoors.

ACCESS TO BIBLES: Bibles can be found in Yemen, but they are difficult to obtain and dangerous for converts to own. For these reasons, many Yemeni believers access the Bible online.

VOM WORK: VOM helps Christians who are persecuted for their faith and supports Yemeni believers who reach out in their community. We also support various forms of media that make God's Word more accessible inside Yemen and help Yemeni believers who had to flee and now live in nearby countries.

MONITORED COUNTRIES

VOM is actively responding to persecution in the following countries.

BURUNDI

The Christian community in Burundi maintains an active witness to Christ among the country's small but vital Muslim population. Through the faithful witness of Burundian Christians, many young Muslims have come to know Christ. These Christian converts from Islam are often opposed and rejected by their community and Muslim family members.

GUINEA

Tribal violence and radical Islam are primary sources of persecution. In some regions and among some tribes deeply rooted in Islam, there is strong social pressure against Christian converts from Islam. Most persecution involves the rejection and physical abuse of Christians by family members.

MADAGASCAR

The predominantly Muslim northwest coast has become increasingly radicalized by groups from the Middle East. While Christians there are mostly recent converts with a need for discipleship and encouragement to proclaim the gospel, local churches and missionaries have experienced violent opposition from radical Muslims. In some cases, Christians have even been killed while trying to witness to Muslims.

RWANDA

Though the population of Rwanda is 89 percent Christian, the Rwandan government has become increasingly restrictive of Christian activity in recent years. Front-line workers reported that 5,000 churches were shut down in 2024 alone for failure to comply with government standards. Christians in Rwanda are concerned that growing government control of churches will negatively affect their ability to teach the Scriptures from a sound biblical worldview. Front-line workers are also concerned that developments in Rwanda may spread to surrounding East African nations.

VENEZUELA

The authoritarian government is hostile toward Christian outreach, and Marxist guerrillas operate freely along the country's border with Colombia.

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 108-109 8/11/26 8:19 AM

The Voice of the Martyrs

Prayer Tools



VOM Global Prayer Journal

This journal includes the country summaries in this global prayer guide along with additional ruled pages you can use to write out your prayers or make note of other prayer needs. With an embossed cover and full-color photos, the journal makes a great gift for anyone desiring to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ.

Visit vom.org/prayer to get your free copy for any monthly gift.

2027 Prayer Calendar

Fellowship with our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the year with VOM's 2027 Prayer Calendar. For each day of the year, a specific prayer request is provided for one of the hostile areas, restricted nations or monitored nations where VOM works.

You can receive a free calendar with any gift. Quantity discounts are available.

vom.org/calendar





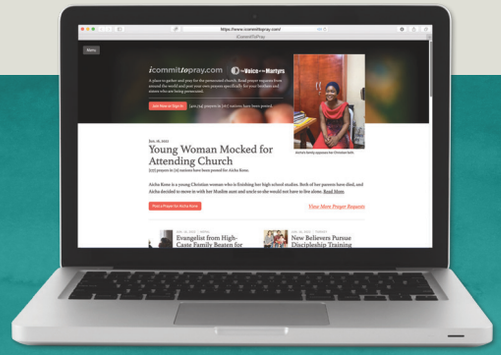
Download the VOM APP

The VOM App will help you fulfill the first request of our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ — "Pray for us!" This useful app for your smartphone or tablet sends a prayer reminder with a specific prayer request to your mobile device every day.

Download from your favorite app store.

ANDROID APP ON Google Play

Download on the App Store



I COMMIT TO PRAY

Each week, VOM will send you an email including information about a recent persecution incident that needs prayer. You will also have the opportunity to post your prayers online.

Some of our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters have been encouraged by seeing firsthand the many prayers lifted up on their behalf!

TO SIGN UP, VISIT ***icommittopray.com***



The Voice of the Martyrs

vom.org/prayer

2027 Global Prayer Guide_v1.indd 112 8/11/26 8:19 AM