

---

World Watch Research

---

# Burkina Faso: Persecution Dynamics

December 2024



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

December 2024

© Open Doors International

[research@od.org](mailto:research@od.org)

# Contents

World Watch List 2025 – Top 50.....	2
World Watch List 2025 – Ranks 51-78 .....	4
Copyright, sources and definitions .....	5
Reporting period .....	5
Brief country details.....	5
Map of country .....	6
Dominant persecution engines and drivers.....	7
Brief description of the persecution situation.....	7
Summary of international obligations and rights violations.....	7
Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period .....	8
Christian communities and how they are affected.....	8
Areas where Christians face most difficulties.....	9
Position on the World Watch List .....	9
Persecution engines.....	10
Drivers of persecution.....	11
The Persecution pattern .....	12
Pressure in the 5 spheres of life.....	13
Violence .....	18
5 Year trends.....	20
Gender-specific religious persecution / Female .....	21
Gender-specific religious persecution / Male.....	23
Persecution of other religious minorities .....	24
Trends Summary .....	24
Further useful reports.....	25
External Links .....	25

## World Watch List 2025 – Top 50

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	96	98	96	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.7	11.1	94	93	92	91	92
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.6	94	89	89	88	87
4	Libya	16.0	16.2	15.9	16.2	16.4	10.6	91	91	88	91	92
5	Sudan	14.1	14.2	15.5	14.9	15.3	16.1	90	87	83	79	79
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.9	12.2	89	89	89	88	88
7	Nigeria	13.5	13.9	14.6	14.9	14.5	16.7	88	88	88	87	85
8	Pakistan	13.6	13.9	15.0	15.0	12.9	16.7	87	87	86	87	88
9	Iran	15.0	14.6	13.5	15.9	16.5	10.9	86	86	86	85	86
10	Afghanistan	15.6	15.9	15.9	16.4	16.7	5.0	85	84	84	98	94
11	India	12.2	12.9	13.3	14.9	13.9	16.5	84	83	82	82	83
12	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.8	15.8	16.6	3.3	81	81	80	81	78
13	Myanmar	12.6	11.1	13.5	14.1	12.9	16.5	81	79	80	79	74
14	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	13.0	15.2	15.6	80	79	76	70	67
15	China	13.2	10.1	12.8	14.6	16.1	11.1	78	78	77	76	74
16	Maldives	15.6	15.3	13.7	15.8	16.5	0.7	78	78	77	77	77
17	Iraq	14.2	14.4	14.3	14.8	13.9	6.1	78	79	76	78	82
18	Syria	13.5	14.4	13.9	14.4	14.3	7.0	78	81	80	78	81
19	Algeria	14.7	14.3	11.5	14.7	16.0	6.3	77	79	73	71	70
20	Burkina Faso	11.7	9.7	13.2	11.5	14.0	15.6	76	75	71	68	67
21	Morocco	13.2	13.8	11.6	12.9	14.3	8.3	74	71	69	69	67
22	Laos	11.8	10.7	13.5	14.1	13.9	9.8	74	75	68	69	71
23	Mauritania	14.6	14.2	13.8	14.2	14.2	2.8	74	72	72	70	71
24	Bangladesh	12.4	10.6	12.7	11.3	10.4	16.1	74	71	69	68	67
25	Uzbekistan	14.6	12.7	13.5	12.4	15.5	4.4	73	71	71	71	71
26	Cuba	13.2	8.5	13.9	13.3	15.1	9.1	73	73	70	66	62
27	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	14.0	15.6	72	70	70	68	66
28	Niger	9.4	9.6	14.5	7.7	14.6	15.7	72	70	70	68	62

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
29	Turkmenistan	14.3	12.3	13.6	13.9	15.3	1.5	71	70	70	69	70
30	Nicaragua	12.4	7.6	13.7	13.3	14.1	9.6	71	70	65	56	51
31	Mexico	11.7	9.0	12.5	11.8	11.0	14.6	71	68	67	65	64
32	Oman	14.5	14.1	10.9	13.8	14.1	3.0	70	69	65	66	63
33	Ethiopia	9.9	9.7	12.6	10.4	12.1	15.6	70	69	66	66	65
34	Tunisia	12.4	13.2	10.1	12.6	13.8	8.1	70	69	67	66	67
35	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	10.8	14.5	16.1	70	67	67	66	64
36	Bhutan	13.2	13.2	12.3	14.1	14.2	2.2	69	68	66	67	64
37	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.9	68	68	68	65	63
38	Kazakhstan	13.3	11.6	12.2	12.8	14.2	4.3	68	65	65	64	64
39	Tajikistan	14.1	12.7	12.7	13.2	13.7	1.9	68	66	66	65	66
40	Egypt	12.7	13.7	12.1	12.4	10.9	6.3	68	68	68	71	75
41	Qatar	14.2	14.2	10.5	13.2	14.4	0.7	67	67	68	74	67
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	2.6	67	66	66	63	62
43	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	8.4	13.1	16.1	67	66	65	65	64
44	Vietnam	10.8	9.5	12.2	14.1	14.1	5.9	67	68	70	71	72
45	Turkey	13.0	11.7	11.7	13.2	11.5	5.4	67	64	66	65	69
46	Colombia	11.0	7.9	12.7	11.5	10.5	12.6	66	68	71	68	67
47	Kyrgyzstan	13.5	10.3	11.7	11.4	12.4	6.9	66	59	59	58	58
48	Brunei	14.8	14.8	10.8	10.8	14.0	0.6	66	66	65	64	64
49	Chad	11.0	8.2	10.2	9.9	10.3	15.9	65	61	58	55	53
50	Jordan	12.9	14.3	10.4	12.2	12.8	2.4	65	65	65	66	64

## World Watch List 2025 – Ranks 51-78

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
51	Malaysia	12.8	13.7	11.7	12.4	11.2	3.0	65	64	66	63	63
52	Azerbaijan	13.3	10.2	9.6	12.2	13.7	5.6	65	60	59	60	56
53	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.9	64	63	64	63	62
54	Nepal	12.2	10.6	9.5	12.6	12.3	5.9	63	62	61	64	66
55	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.4	63	62	63	61	58
56	Russian Federation	12.7	7.9	10.7	13.1	14.1	4.4	63	58	57	56	57
57	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.1	1.7	61	61	60	59	56
58	Kuwait	13.1	13.6	9.4	12.0	12.2	0.9	61	61	64	64	63
59	Indonesia	10.9	11.9	10.9	11.6	10.2	5.7	61	66	68	68	63
60	UAE	13.3	13.4	9.5	11.3	12.8	0.6	61	61	62	62	62
61	Sri Lanka	12.7	8.7	11.5	11.5	8.5	7.6	60	60	57	63	62
62	Palestinian Territories	13.1	13.3	10.3	10.7	12.1	0.2	60	60	60	59	58
63	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	14.6	59	57	55	52	48
64	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	12.1	9.4	58	58	57	50	42
65	Honduras	7.9	4.7	11.7	7.3	9.9	13.1	55	55	53	48	46
66	Togo	9.2	6.7	10.4	7.1	11.5	9.3	54	52	49	44	43
67	Bahrain	12.0	13.2	8.6	11.3	8.5	0.6	54	55	55	57	56
68	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	8.9	54	52	48	43	47
69	Ukraine	6.8	5.0	7.8	12.5	13.5	7.2	53	44	37	37	34
70	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	8.3	53	52	52	51	46
71	Venezuela	6.3	4.4	11.1	10.0	10.8	9.6	52	53	56	51	39
72	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	8.8	16.1	52	52	51	48	47
73	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	9.6	51	44	44	42	42
74	Lebanon	11.5	10.1	7.0	6.2	6.7	7.2	49	48	40	35	34
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	4.4	48	47	44	44	43
76	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	8.1	15.6	47	46	46	43	43

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
77	Belarus	9.9	3.7	5.0	10.8	14.1	3.1	47	46	43	33	30
78	Philippines	9.2	6.6	6.6	6.1	5.7	8.5	43	40	32	34	26

## Copyright, sources and definitions

World Watch Research has divided up the previously named Full Country Dossier into two separate documents:

- [Background country information](#) (published annually in summer)
- Persecution dynamics (published annually in January).

These documents are the property of World Watch Research (WWR), the research department of Open Doors International. They include data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD). Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the end of each document under the heading “External links”. These documents may be used and distributed free of charge, but please always acknowledge the source as: © Open Doors International.

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

The latest update of WWL Methodology can be found on the research pages of the Open Doors website: <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/>.

## Reporting period

The WWL 2025 reporting period was 1 October 2023 - 30 September 2024.

## Brief country details

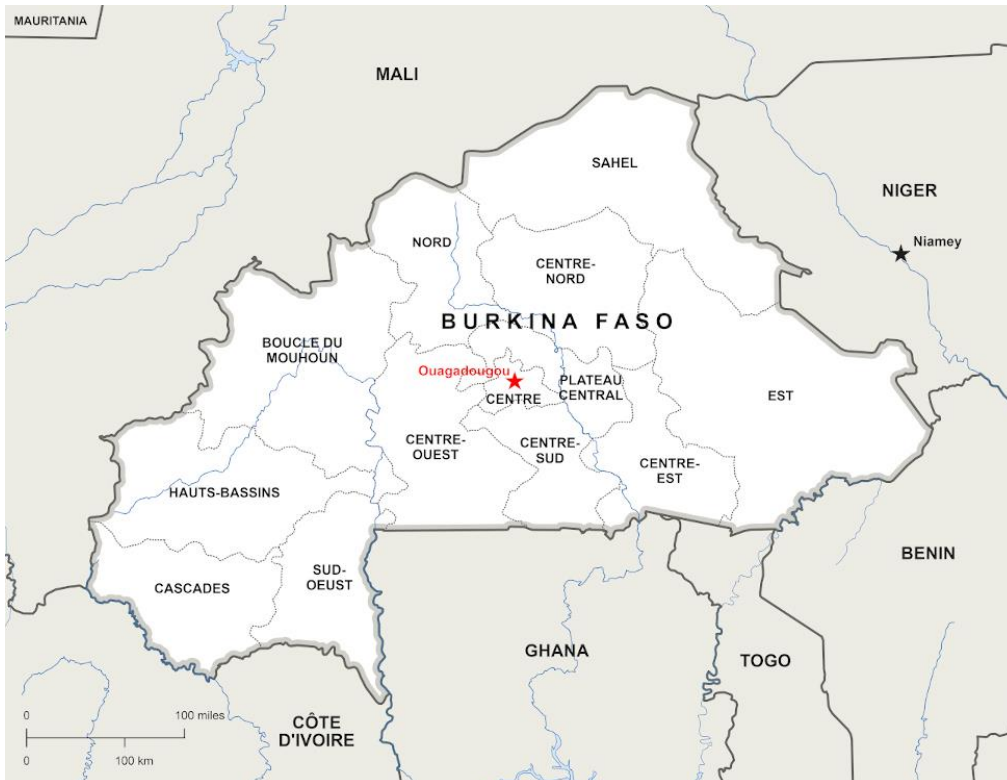
Burkina Faso: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
23,840,000	6,169,000	25.9

Zurlo G A and Johnson T M, eds., World Christian Database, Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed May 2024

Burkina Faso: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	6,169,000	25.9
Muslim	13,362,000	56.0
Hindu	0	0.0
Buddhist	0	0.0
Ethnic religionist	4,158,000	17.4
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	5,000	0.0
Atheist	870	0.0
Agnostic	145,000	0.6
Other	1,000	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Zurlo G A and Johnson T M, eds., World Christian Database, Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed May 2024

## Map of country



## Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Burkina Faso: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Islamic oppression	Violent religious groups, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, One's own (extended) family, Non-Christian religious leaders, Ethnic group leaders
Organized corruption and crime	Organized crime cartels or networks, Violent religious groups
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials
Clan oppression	Ethnic group leaders

*Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.*

### Brief description of the persecution situation

In recent years, the impact of violent Islamic militants in the country has been expanding, making their influence felt even in cities that had previously been beyond their reach. This has particularly been the case for the “Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims” (JNIM). Of concern, the tri-border zone of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger has become a base for Islamic insurgency, with the continuous attacks by jihadist groups highlighting the ongoing instability and security challenges in the region. Christians have been targeted and killed and churches have been destroyed. Christians of Muslim background are the most persecuted Christian group in the country. Similar attacks in Niger, Mali and the greater Sahel region are making the situation in Burkina Faso very serious. Christians have been targeted in villages, churches and workplaces. Hundreds of churches have been closed due to jihadist activities. Family and community members reject converts and try to force them to renounce their Christian faith, making them afraid to express their faith in public because of such threats. The scope for religious freedom for Christians is contracting as jihadist ideologies gain traction and expand within the broader community.

### Summary of international obligations and rights violations

Burkina Faso has committed to respect and protect fundamental rights in the following international treaties:

1. [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#)
2. [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CAT\)](#)
3. [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)
4. [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)



Burkina Faso is not fulfilling its international obligations by regularly violating or failing to protect the following rights of Christians:

- Christians are killed for their faith (ICCPR Art. 6)
- Christian converts from a Muslim background are ostracized, faced with opposition by their families, and threatened with loss of inheritance (ICCPR Art. 18)
- Christians and their activities are monitored by militant groups (ICCPR Art. 17)
- Christian female converts run the risk of being forcibly married to Muslim men (ICCPR Art. 23; CEDAW Art. 16)
- Perpetrators of violence against Christians are sometimes left unpunished (ICCPR Art. 2)

## Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- **October 2023, Débé village attacked:** In October 2023, an armed group forced the entire Christian population of Débé to leave their village. They shot dead two scouts inside the village church who resisted their orders. This attack marked a significant escalation in violence against Christians in the region.
- **February 2024, church attacked in Essakane:** On 25 February 2024, an armed group attacked a Catholic church in Essakane during a Sunday church service, killing 15 people. This attack targeted worshippers and was carried out by suspected radical Islamic militants.
- **August 2024, church worshippers attacked in Sanaba:** "The victims in Sanaba were members of a Christian Alliance Evangelical church attending a Sunday service. on Aug 25. Armed militants tied the hands of 26 Christian men and cut their throats, according to a pastor from the capital, Ouagadougou, who visited the site afterward. Survivors sought refuge in a local school" ([Christian Post, 23 September 2024](#)).
- Christians' homes and properties were attacked and looted. As a result, many Christians are now in internally displaced camps.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** Expatriate Christians are not involuntarily isolated and are therefore not treated as a separate WWL category.

**Historical Christian communities:** The Roman Catholic Church is the most dominant Christian denomination in the country. Most of the country's political leaders, including heads of state, have been Catholics. Catholics face less persecution compared to other Christian groups due to their larger numbers.

**Converts:** This category includes Christians of Muslim or traditional African religious background. Converts from a Muslim background experience the most serious persecution from their families and communities.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** Baptist, Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations are concentrated mostly in the major cities. They are targeted more often than historical Christian groups by Islamic militants due to their focus on proselytizing.

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The northern and eastern parts of the country are the main areas where Christians experience most pressure and violence, particularly outside the major cities. In the western part of the country, ethno-religious groups also put pressure on Christians.

## Position on the World Watch List

Burkina Faso: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	76	20
WWL 2024	75	20
WWL 2023	71	23
WWL 2022	68	32
WWL 2021	67	32

Over the past five years, Burkina Faso’s score on the World Watch List has steadily increased. In 2025, the nation rose by one point, reaching 76 and ranking #20. Average pressure remained very high and violence extremely high. This reflects the intensifying presence of jihadist movements and socio-economic crises, heavily impacting the country’s Christian population. Widespread violence and pressure, predominantly targeting Christians, have been significant factors in this escalation. The expanding reach of jihadist groups has forced the closure of numerous churches and Christian schools, placing immense strain on Christian communities. Targeted attacks and fatalities among Christians have fostered a climate of fear, deterring many from attending church services or sending their children to Christian educational institutions.

Additionally, jihadist factions have seized control in various regions, often replacing government functions and assuming the role of essential service providers. This already complex situation has been compounded by Burkina Faso's political instability, marked by military coups amid an escalating security crisis. Instability in neighboring countries, particularly Niger and Mali, has further fueled Burkina Faso’s insecurity. Once known for its religious tolerance, the country is now witnessing a troubling shift towards intolerance, especially against non-Muslim communities. Ethnic conflicts, often intertwined with religious divisions, have deepened, placing added pressure on Christian converts and other Christian groups. In sum, Burkina Faso now stands on increasingly fragile ground.

## Persecution engines

Burkina Faso: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Very strong
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Very weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Strong
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Strong

*The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.*

### **Islamic oppression (Very strong) - blended with Clan oppression (Medium)**

Burkina Faso has experienced several attacks by Islamic militant groups in recent years, especially in the northern region and occasionally in the capital. These can be seen as violent attempts at "Islamizing" the country. *Ansar ul Islam* was formed in 2016 and has tried to impose its laws in the northern part of the country through violent and non-violent means. There is also *Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslim* ("Group supporting Islam and Muslims") operating in the country and has ties with local militant groups. Its preachers influence the youth into blaming their misfortune on the French and on the corruption of morals through the West. There have been attacks on churches and Christians and some churches fear further attacks may be planned. A country researcher writes: "Generally speaking, the ethnic groups are tolerant but with the increasing influence of Islamic expansion, Muslim leaders from various tribes have become sources of persecution." Converts from a Muslim background experience the most serious persecution from their families and communities.

### **Organized corruption and crime (Strong)**

In many countries in the Sahel region, organized corruption is enabling the jihadists to recruit, buy weapons and operate with impunity. A country researcher reported: "There is a high level of corruption in governance. Crimes such as robbery and kidnapping are being committed in various regions of the country. The government is doing little or nothing to contain such crime, even in the capital city, Ouagadougou."

### **Dictatorial paranoia (Strong)**

In Burkina Faso, the government discourages church leaders from criticizing government policies and from raising questions about justice, which hinders the Christian community's ability to engage in pub-

lic discourse on national and religious issues.

## Drivers of persecution

Burkina Faso: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	VERY STRONG			MEDIUM	VERY WEAK			STRONG	STRONG
Government officials								Strong	
Ethnic group leaders	Medium			Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Strong								
Religious leaders of other churches					Very weak				
Violent religious groups	Very strong								Strong
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Strong								
One's own (extended) family	Strong								
Organized crime cartels or networks									Strong

*The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.*

### Drivers of Islamic oppression, blended with Clan oppression

- **Violent religious groups (Very strong):** There are several radical Islamic groups operating in the country (e.g. those affiliated with IS, al-Qaeda or Boko Haram). These groups have been responsible for numerous attacks.
- **Citizens (Strong):** Ordinary citizens in local communities and mob violence have been responsible for putting converts from Islam under pressure. As a result, converts do not express their Christian faith in public.
- **Extended family (Strong):** Christians of Muslim background experience severe pressure from their families to return to Islam.

- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** In remote areas, preachers have been actively inciting violence against Christians and spreading hatred towards Christians.
- **Ethnic group leaders (Medium):** Many ethnic group leaders living in Muslim-dominated areas also harass Christians who have encouraged Muslims to convert to the Christian faith.

#### Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

- **Violent religious groups (Strong):** Militant groups have committed atrocities against foreign Christians in the past and are likely to continue to do so when the opportunities arise. Attacks by these groups have caused a high number of killings and displacement. Criminal networks are creating an environment whereby jihadists flourish, since these need to be able to act with impunity. Thus, the role of organized corruption is increasing in the country and, as a result, the rule of law is being weakened.
- **Organized crime networks (Strong):** It seems that a parallel state structure has been established outside the normal state machinery. The types of crimes committed range from kidnapping and theft and are conducted by a variety of groups in various parts of the country. This is increasingly becoming a cause of concern, especially since foreign aid workers are a favorite target. The abductors, often Islamic militants, think that abducting NGO workers will mean higher sums can be demanded for ransom. It also happens to be the case that there are many Christians working for foreign NGOs.

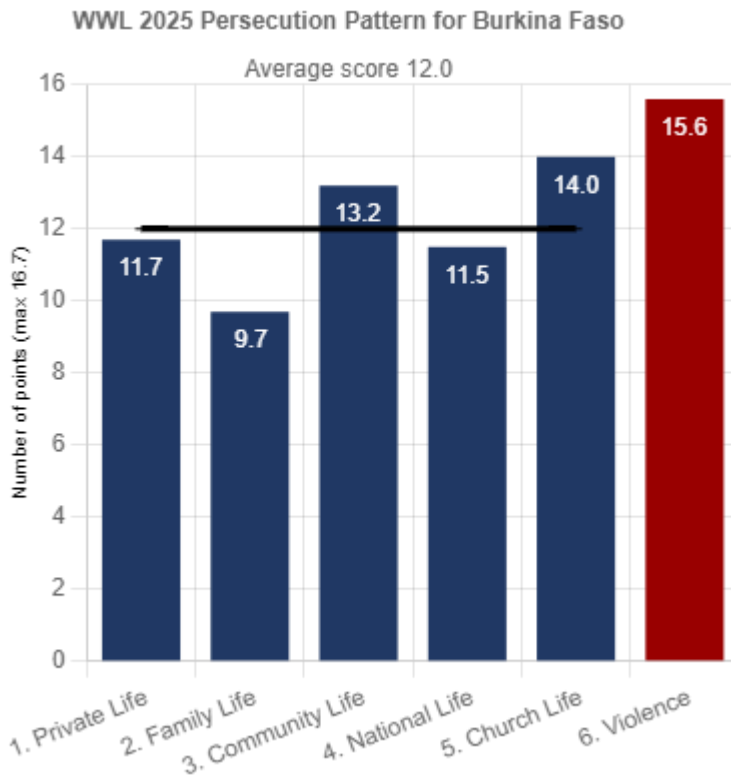
#### Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Strong):** Government officials exert pressure on Christians to remain silent on various critical issues. This includes discouraging them from speaking out against the government, discussing the recent coup, commenting on civilian matters, and raising questions about justice. This kind of suppression serves to limit the scope of religious freedom and hampers the community's ability to engage in public discourse on matters that are both nationally and religiously significant.

## The Persecution pattern

The WWL 2025 Persecution Pattern for Burkina Faso below shows:

- The average pressure in WWL 2025 is 12.0 points, similar to WWL 2024.
- Pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* (14.0 points), followed by the *Community sphere* (13.2 points). Both spheres are affected by the activities of jihadists, with churches facing direct attacks and Christians in communities experiencing restrictions and hostilities.
- The score for violence is at an extreme level, 15.6 points, similar to WWL 2024.



## Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

*In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, questions have been selected from the WWL 2025 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/>.*

### Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

***Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (3.25 points)***

It is extremely risky for Christians in Burkina Faso to reveal their faith: The growing influence of jihadist groups enforcing strict Sharia law has made it perilous for Christians to share their beliefs openly, including on online platforms and social media. This hostile environment has driven many to conceal their faith or seek refuge in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.

***Block 1.5: It has been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols. (3.25 points)***

Displaying Christian images and symbols can lead to severe repercussions, including death. The presence of jihadist groups enforcing a strict interpretation of Sharia law has created an environment where such expressions of faith are increasingly perilous. This hostile atmosphere forces many Christians to conceal their beliefs or seek safety in IDP camps. In jihadist-controlled areas, Christian institutions—including schools, properties, and healthcare facilities—are frequently targeted, either destroyed or forcibly closed. Private homes, especially those of converts, are often violated. In these

conditions, displaying Christian symbols or practicing faith openly exposes believers to targeted attacks and restricts their ability to freely embrace and express their beliefs.

***Block 1.6: It has been risky for Christians to access Christian radio or TV, or Christian material on the Internet. (3.25 points)***

Accessing Christian TV, radio, or other materials online or through any channel is extremely difficult for Christians in Burkina Faso. The risk of being overheard or monitored is high, and if any evidence of this falls into the hands of jihadists, it could lead to severe persecution. The expanding influence of jihadist groups enforcing strict Sharia law has created a hostile environment for Christians attempting to engage with Christian media.

**Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere**

***Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)***

The rise of jihadist groups over the past decade has made it unsafe for Christians to hold weddings in churches or within their communities. The presence of Islamic extremist groups, combined with clan-based discrimination and organized criminal activities, has led to significant restrictions on these ceremonies. As a result, Christians often struggle to observe traditional family gatherings and religious rites, with weddings—a central celebration of faith and community—especially vulnerable to these pressures. The destruction or forced closure of Christian institutions has compounded the issue, eroding safe spaces for such celebrations and profoundly disrupting Christian family life.

***Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (3.00 points)***

Raising children according to Christian beliefs in Burkina Faso has become increasingly difficult, with families constantly fearful for their children's safety. Parents worry that if their children speak openly about their faith at school, they could attract unwanted attention, putting them at serious risk in a hostile environment. The pressure from jihadist groups and fundamentalist influences within the community has also infiltrated educational spaces, where children are often compelled to study Islam, especially in regions under jihadist control. This pressure restricts Christian families from instilling their own religious values in their children and forces many to hide their beliefs.

***Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (3.00 points)***

Christian children in Burkina Faso are frequently pressured into attending teachings aligned with the majority religion or even anti-Christian lessons at various levels of education. In areas heavily influenced by jihadist groups, schools often prioritize or mandate instruction in Islam, leaving Christian children with little choice but to participate. This pressure is compounded by the risks associated with refusal, as standing out or objecting could expose them and their families to serious persecution. For Christian families, this situation poses a painful dilemma, as they are forced to balance their desire to educate their children with the need to protect their faith.

***Block 2.12: Christian spouses of non-Christians have been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases. (2.50 points)***

In Burkina Faso, Christian spouses in marriages with non-Christians face significant discrimination, particularly when it comes to custody rights in divorce cases. Christian spouses are often excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of their children, a situation that disproportionately impacts converts, who are frequently the primary targets of community hostility. Converts to Christianity endure added pressure, facing ostracism and discrimination that deeply affect their social standing and family relationships. For these individuals, the prospect of losing custody in divorce not only undermines their parental rights but also places their children at greater risk of being raised under religious principles conflicting with their Christian faith.

**Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere**

***Block 3.1: Christians have been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (e.g. for not meeting majority religion or traditional dress codes, beard codes etc.). (3.50 points)***

In Burkina Faso, Christians encounter relentless harassment, threats, and obstruction in their daily lives solely because of their faith. As communities grow increasingly radicalized, daily interactions often come with discrimination in public services, exclusion from community resources, and targeted hostility. In areas under jihadist control, this harassment intensifies, with Christians facing severe restrictions and threats, making simple tasks and daily routines fraught with risk. The northern, eastern and western regions are particularly affected, where jihadist groups actively monitor and intimidate Christians, forcing many to abandon their homes and seek safety in IDP camps. The closure or destruction of Christian schools and institutions adds to the difficulties, stripping communities of safe spaces for education and worship.

***Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.50 points)***

In Burkina Faso, Christians face relentless monitoring in nearly every aspect of their lives, including their travel, work routines and daily interactions. Jihadist groups, their supporters and local informants closely observe their movements, creating a climate where every action is watched. This intense surveillance means that Christians cannot travel freely, follow regular work routines, or engage in ordinary activities without fear of exposure or retaliation. This atmosphere of constant oversight severely restricts their freedom, making the simple acts of daily life fraught with risk and further isolating Christian communities in their struggle to practice their faith safely.

***Block 3.3: Christians have been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage. (3.50 points)***

Christians live under a constant threat of abduction, a tactic frequently employed by jihadist groups targeting them for their faith. In recent years, numerous Christians have been kidnapped, often with demands for ransom placed upon their families or communities. These abductions create a climate of fear and insecurity, as the threat looms over both individuals and entire congregations. Many families have been forced to pay exorbitant sums to secure the release of loved ones, while in some cases, the captives have been subjected to severe physical and psychological abuse. The fear of abduction



restricts Christians' movement and disrupts their ability to live openly, deepening the challenges they face in practicing their faith amidst persistent danger.

***Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (3.50 points)***

Christians in Burkina Faso face significant struggles in accessing basic community resources such as drinking water, grazing lands and other shared necessities - particularly in areas under jihadist control or where communities have become radicalized. Christians often find themselves excluded from communal resources, either through direct hostility or under pressure from radicalized locals who view them as outsiders due to their faith. Accessing essential resources becomes fraught with danger, as Christians are frequently threatened, harassed, or even attacked when attempting to use community wells, grazing lands, and markets. This exclusion not only limits their ability to sustain their livelihoods but also isolates Christian families, further weakening their foothold in areas where they have lived for generations.

**Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere**

***Block 4.4: Christians have been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons. (3.75 points)***

Traveling as a Christian in Burkina Faso faces more than mere hindrance—it is often a life-threatening ordeal, particularly when passing through areas controlled by jihadist groups or radicalized communities. At militant checkpoints, Christians are frequently singled out, interrogated and targeted solely based on their faith, with many facing kidnapping for ransom or violent attacks. This constant threat has forced Christians to severely restrict their movements, isolating them from essential services, employment, and connections to family and community.

***Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)***

Christians in Burkina Faso face widespread discrimination: Local administrations, government offices and even military personnel frequently overlook or dismiss the concerns of Christian communities, creating a hostile environment marked by bias and neglect. As local and national authorities increasingly accommodate or turn a blind eye to radical Islamic ideologies, Christians find it ever more difficult to secure basic rights, maintain their safety, and practice their faith openly.

***Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)***

Christians in Burkina Faso often face barriers to holding public office or advancing in their careers, specifically due to their faith. In both government institutions and public services, Christians are frequently overlooked for promotion, while others are entirely barred from certain positions. This systematic exclusion prevents Christians from participating fully in public life and limits their influence in key decision-making roles. The discrimination they face not only stifles career advancement but also marginalizes their voices in governmental and administrative sectors, reinforcing their status as a minority with restricted rights and opportunities in an environment increasingly influenced by extremist ideologies.

***Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.25 points)***

Under the current military regime, Christians who openly voice their perspectives are often labeled as adversaries of the state. Authorities tend to associate outspoken Christians with Western influences, particularly linking them to France, the country's former colonial power. This perception places Christians at risk of being seen as aligned with foreign interests rather than as citizens, casting them as potential threats to national identity and sovereignty. As a result, Christians face intimidation, harassment, and even punitive actions for publicly expressing their beliefs or opinions, intensifying their sense of isolation and vulnerability within the country.

**Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere*****Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.75 points)***

Church activities in Burkina Faso are increasingly subject to monitoring, disruption, and outright obstruction, with jihadist groups targeting the Christian community in efforts to eradicate their presence. Churches are under constant surveillance, and many have been deliberately destroyed, leaving congregations without safe spaces for communal worship or spiritual support. The attacks extend beyond places of worship, with Christian-run schools and healthcare facilities often looted, closed or demolished, stripping communities of essential services. Church leaders face severe restrictions on their mobility due to security threats, making it dangerous to hold worship gatherings or distribute religious materials.

***Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (3.75 points)***

In an increasingly hostile environment shaped by the growing influence of radical Islamic groups, obtaining legal status or licenses for Christian institutions has become exceptionally difficult. The establishment and operation of churches are heavily impeded, as the process for securing permits is met with bureaucratic obstacles and discrimination. Christian-run educational and healthcare institutions face similar barriers, with closures and even destruction leaving communities deprived of crucial services. Licensing delays and denials make it nearly impossible for these institutions to resume operations, forcing many educators and healthcare providers to abandon their work. Church leaders, already restricted by limited mobility due to security concerns, are further hindered in providing guidance and support to their communities.

***Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.75 points)***

The constant threat of radical Islamic violence makes organizing any activities beyond church walls exceedingly risky, limiting Christians' ability to gather in public and express their beliefs openly.

***Block 5.8: Christian preaching, teaching and/or published materials have been monitored. (3.75 points)***

In Burkina Faso, Christian preaching, teaching, and the distribution of published materials are closely monitored and restricted, as the community faces a complex and hostile environment shaped by jihadist influence, clan oppression, organized crime, corruption, and authoritarian control. Christian activities, especially those involving public expression of faith, are frequently under surveillance by

jihadist groups and local informants. Churches and Christian-run institutions have been systematically targeted, with many destroyed or forced to close, severely limiting opportunities for communal worship, religious education, and the distribution of faith-based materials. This pressure is compounded by clan-based discrimination, which isolates Christians within society, especially those who have converted, as they are often marginalized by traditional allegiances. Organized crime and corruption exacerbate the situation with local authorities frequently turning a blind eye to ransom demands, extortion, and intimidation targeting Christians. This all creates an environment where Christian preaching, teaching, and sharing of published materials become acts fraught with danger.

## Violence

*Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:*

### **1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced.**

*Possible reasons for this may be:*

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

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

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

### **3. The use of symbolic numbers:**

- *In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10\*, 100\* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10\* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100\* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000\* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000\*, 100,000\* and 1,000,000\*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.*

Burkina Faso: Violence scores per Block 6 question in questionnaire	WWL 2025	WWL 2024
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	201	31
6.2 How many churches or public Christian properties (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	100 *	100 *
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.4 How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5 How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	10 *	10 *
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	100 *	100 *
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	10 *	10 *
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	1000 *	100 *
6.9 How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	100	100 *
6.10 How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	1000	1000 *
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	10000 *	7000
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	1000 *	100 *

In the WWL 2025 reporting period:

- **Christians killed:** 201 Christians were killed for faith-related reasons, a significant increase from 31 in WWL 2024.
- **Churches attacked:** At least 100 churches or public Christian properties were attacked, damaged or destroyed in both WWL 2025 and WWL 2024.
- **Christians forced to leave their homes:** At least 10,000 Christians were forced to leave their homes or go into hiding for faith-related reasons in WWL 2025, up from 7,000 in WWL 2024.

## 5 Year trends

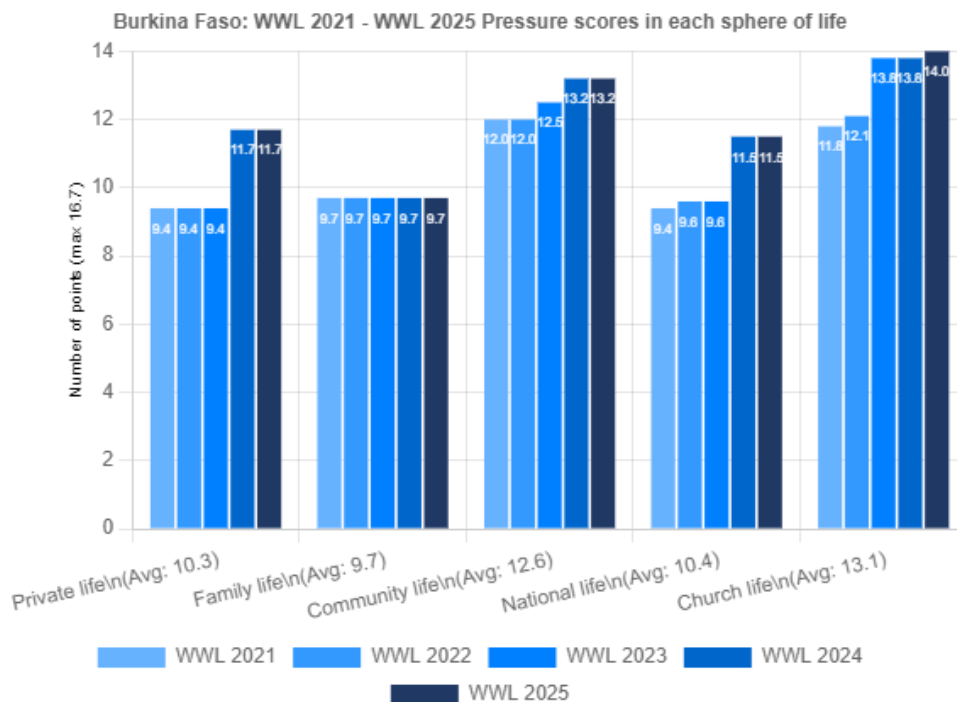
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

### 5 Year trends: Average pressure

Burkina Faso: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	12.0
2024	12.0
2023	11.0
2022	10.6
2021	10.5

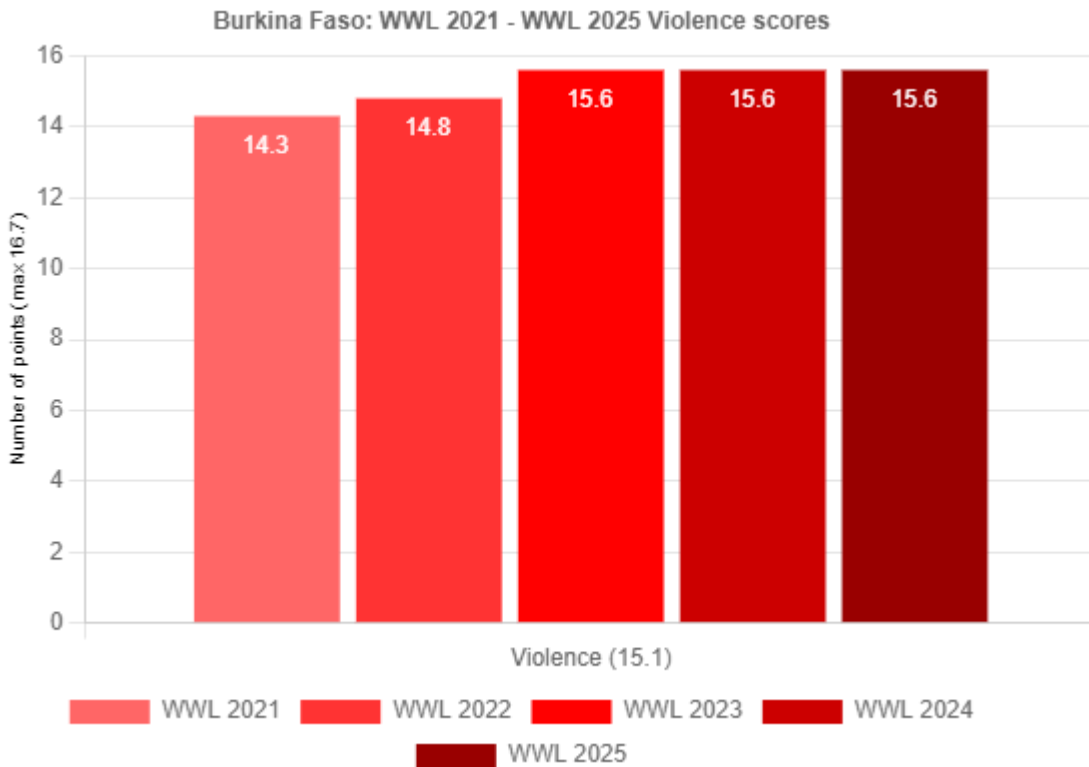
Pressure on Christians has steadily risen each year, climbing from an average of 10.5 points in the WWL 2021 reporting period and levelling off at 12.0 points in WWL 2024 and WWL 2025. This trend reflects the increasing challenges Christians face across multiple spheres of life, with pressure coming from different parts of the country. The growing constraints, compounded by extremely high violence scores, have made life increasingly difficult for Christians, as their rights and freedoms are continuously threatened. Governmental instability has allowed jihadist groups to widen their influence, further destabilizing conditions.

### 5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



This five-year pressure chart vividly illustrates the challenges faced by Christians, especially within the *Church* and *Community spheres of life*: The *Church sphere* registers the highest pressure, with an average score of 13.1 points, followed closely by the *Community sphere* with an average of 12.6 points. Under such pressure, many Christians have been forced to leave their homes, often relocating to IDP camps or other safer areas.

**5 Year trends: Violence against Christians**



The violence chart for the most recent five years of reporting (WWL 2021–WWL 2025) reveals that Christians in Burkina Faso have endured some of the most extreme levels of violence, with the score now levelling off at 15.6 points (out of a maximum of 16.7 points). Christians have faced killings, church destruction, property damage, kidnappings and other brutal attacks.

**Gender-specific religious persecution / Female**

<p><b>Burkina Faso</b></p> <p><b>Female Pressure Points</b></p> <p><b>Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abduction</li> <li>Denied access to social community/networks</li> <li>Denied inheritance or possessions</li> <li>Forced Marriage</li> <li>Incarceration by family (house arrest)</li> <li>Violence - physical</li> <li>Violence - psychological</li> <li>Violence – sexual</li> </ul>

Women and girls face distinctive forms of persecution, including rape, forced marriage, banishment, and abduction. They are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and forced marriages and face pervasive threats of death and abuse, with girls facing early and forced marriages. Christian women also encounter pressures such as family rejection and discrimination, all of which contribute to a complex environment of fear and insecurity. The challenges faced by women and girls underscore the need for attention to gender-specific dimensions of persecution, emphasizing the unique vulnerabilities they experience in the face of violence and coercion.

Burkina Faso is located in a region where radical Islamic groups have a huge influence, and the rule of law is very weak, particularly in the Sahel and the eastern regions of the country where Islamic law is applied. Jihadists exploited this weakness during the COVID-19 crisis to gain increased control of the country's infrastructure, especially in [the north](#) (Royal United Services Institute, 9 November 2022). Within this context, there is a high potential for women and girls to be abducted by militants during raids. Some security experts have said that the kidnapping of women and children by jihadis in parts of West Africa signify desperation to create regional chaos. In response to the kidnapping of dozens of women and children in the northern region of the country, an expert said: "I am alarmed that dozens of women out to search for food for their families were abducted in broad daylight". Female converts, according to many reports, are especially vulnerable to abduction and forced marriage. The militants may force them to marry one of their members or subjugate them to sexual slavery. A country expert states: "The jihadists' attacks on many villages have isolated many Christians from other members of the family. In some villages, many women were abducted and kept in the bush for a long time by the jihadists ... they have been victims of rape and forced marriages ... and that has isolated them from their husbands and children".

Raping Christian women and girls is a common method of attacking Christian communities. In many areas, there is very little understanding of women's rights, so many people consider it "normal" to sexually assault a woman. Women and girls who are victims to such abuse are taught to believe that they have brought shame, dishonor and stigma to the family, and the feeling of worthlessness can also weaken the family spiritually if not addressed. In particular the daughters of Christian leaders are often targeted through sexual violence "to aggravate the Christian community". One of the most pervasive forms of persecution that Christian women face is rape, which is often underreported. This lack of reporting can be attributed to various factors, including social stigma and fear of reprisal. The issue becomes even more complex when considering that underreporting perpetuates a cycle of silence, making it difficult to grasp the extent of the problem.

An African Union security expert stated that women and children are becoming easy targets for Islamic militants because they are vulnerable and unable to defend themselves: "Civilians are easy targets because civilians are not armed. Young girls, and women are very vulnerable, they can be easily abducted, kidnapped, and all that because they know this will get international condemnation and uproar, they use those means" ([DW](#), 20 January 2023).

Converts from an Islamic or traditional religious background face additional pressure and violence. Families beat them, give them in forced marriage, withdraw them from school and in some instances, chase them out of the family. Some young women are also threatened with death. Although Burkina Faso is a CEDAW signatory and has committed to ending child, early and forced marriage by 2030, 52% of girls are married before their 18th birthday ([Girls Not Brides/Burkina Faso](#), accessed 11

December 2024). A country expert states that forced marriages are very common, going on to describe a situation where a girl died by suicide in order to escape a forced marriage.

Another common form of pressuring converts is to keep them under house arrest. As conversion to another religion is considered a betrayal by some families, they may also be repudiated and denied their inheritance. Christian girls will also be put under intense pressure to convert to Islam. The threat of forced marriage, sexual abuse, rejection and even death causes complex psychological trauma to Christian women and girls.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Burkina Faso	Male Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abduction</li> <li>Forced to flee town/country</li> <li>Military/militia conscription/service against conscience</li> <li>Violence – death</li> <li>Violence – physical</li> <li>Violence – psychological</li> </ul>

The displacement of over 2 million people in Burkina Faso has been named the world’s most neglected crisis ([Reliefweb Press Release](#), 19 December 2023). The country has endured years of conflict, with violence increasing since the two coups in 2022, with militias – who have attacked water sources and forced school closures – now controlling up to 40% of the country’s territory ([The Guardian](#), 1 June 2023). Indeed, the number of schools closed in the country has long past the 6,000 mark, affecting close to 1 million students. Children out of school are more likely to be forced to work, to be recruited into armed groups, or be victims of gender-based violence and exploitation ([The Guardian](#), 1 June 2023). Islamic militant groups operating in the Sahel region often recruit their members from countries like Niger and Burkina Faso. Christian men and boys are targeted for recruitment, physical attacks and for ransom. The abduction and killing of Christian men causes fear and trauma in Christian communities, as well as economic fragility as the men are normally the family providers.

Further fracturing the stability of the Church, many men and boys flee the country due to the pressures they face. An expert comments: “Christian men and boys are targeted and recruited by militant groups. In conflict areas, they are often victims of physical attacks by violent Islamic militants. When Christian men and boys are forcibly displaced from their homes and towns because of their faith, the families are seriously affected by the persecution as well.” In November 2023, at least 40 civilians were killed by al-Qaeda-linked rebels trying to take control of a besieged town in Burkina Faso’s hard-hit northern region. The United Nation’s rights office called the attack a war crime, with an additional 42 people wounded and three camps for IDP’s set on fire ([The Independent](#), 29 November 2023).



Church leaders, the majority of whom are males, have also been targeted by militant groups. According to reports, an unknown number of pastors and their families have been abducted and remain in captivity. Others have been “executed in front of their families”.

## Persecution of other religious minorities

As reported by the US State Department ([IRFR 2023 Burkina Faso](#)):

- "Terrorist groups, armed insurgents, and militant jihadists killed imams, other clergy, and worshippers while attacking and destroying mosques, churches, and animists' places of worship."

Burkina Faso is a country where Islamic radicalization is growing. The peripheries of the country are under the influence of Islamic militants and the mosques and madrassas teach radical versions of Sunni Islam, thus causing even Sufi Muslims to be under threat. In these areas, there is no place for religious minorities. It was even reported that teachers in schools were threatened to hold Quran classes or face repercussions. This is also making life difficult for more moderate Muslims.

## Trends Summary

### 1) Islamic militancy is gaining ground in Burkina Faso

Islamic militancy is rapidly advancing in Burkina Faso, posing a grave threat to the country's stability and religious tolerance. The radicalization of the Islamic population is becoming increasingly evident, with extremist groups such as JNIM, AQIM and Boko Haram expanding their influence. These groups exploited the government's focus on the COVID-19 crisis to further their agendas. The withdrawal of French forces in February 2023 helped create a security vacuum, making the country more vulnerable to jihadist activities. Despite these challenges, the Burkinabe government has responded assertively; in 2023 and early 2024, numerous military operations were launched against insurgent groups, signaling a firm commitment to addressing security threats.

However, since October 2023, the situation has worsened significantly. Two scouts were executed by militants inside the village church of Débé in October 2023, leading to the displacement of the entire Christian population. In February 2024, gunmen attacked a church in Essakane killing 15 Christians. In April and May 2024, militants attacked and set fire to churches in northern Burkina Faso, killing 12 people, including pastors, as they left worship services. The persistence of illegal trafficking and weak governance continues to provide fertile ground for jihadists to thrive. These groups exploit these conditions, using illegal trade to fund their operations and further destabilize the region.

### 2) Ongoing instability

Instability continues to plague Burkina Faso, creating a volatile and challenging environment. In 2022, the nation experienced significant turmoil with two coups within just eight months. The coup leaders have consistently blamed the previous government for failing to combat the jihadist threat effectively. However, since taking power, they have not shown greater success in dealing with the Islamic insurgency. This troubling pattern is not unique to Burkina Faso but is a concerning trend across West Africa. The prevailing political uncertainty and insecurity has cast shadows on the military leadership's ability to uphold its promises of holding elections in the near future. The tri-state border is among the most violent and neglected areas, where the intensity of violence remains exceptionally high.

### 3) Transnational trafficking, persecution, and its impact on governance and security

Burkina Faso faces a mounting crisis due to transnational trafficking networks that exploit its porous borders and fragile state institutions. These networks facilitate the illegal trade of people, precious minerals, narcotics and other illicit goods, destabilizing governance and undermining the rule of law. The situation is exacerbated by the active involvement of armed jihadist groups, who capitalize on trafficking routes and profits to finance their operations. These groups use the proceeds to acquire weapons, which are then employed to carry out acts of persecution and fuel ongoing conflicts with both civilian populations and state forces. The dual challenges of trafficking and jihadist insurgencies have placed enormous pressure on governance structures, contributing to a cycle of insecurity and weakened institutional capacity in the country.

### Further useful reports

Further background information per country and a selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on the Research & Reports pages of the Open Doors website:

- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-background/>
- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/>.
- [Africa - Recent upsurge in military coups - September 2023](#)

### External Links

- Copyright, sources and definitions: Background country information - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-background/>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Christian Post, 23 September 2024 - <https://www.christianpost.com/news/jihadists-kill-26-christians-during-worship-service-burkina-faso.html>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: the north - <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/fragile-future-sahel-wake-covid-19-and-ukraine-war>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: DW - <https://www.dw.com/en/why-kidnappers-in-west-africa-now-target-women/a-64461678>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: Girls Not Brides/Burkina Faso - <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/burkina-faso/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: Reliefweb Press Release - <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/worlds-most-neglected-crisis-displacement-burkina-faso>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: The Guardian - <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/jun/01/burkina-faso-is-the-worlds-most-neglected-crisis-as-focus-remains-on-ukraine>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: The Guardian - <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/sep/14/quarter-of-schools-closed-in-burkina-faso-as-fighting-escalates-after-coup>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: (The Independent - <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/united-nations-ap-burkina-faso-nigeria-abuja-b2455415.html>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Burkina Faso - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/burkina-faso/>

- Further useful reports: Africa - Recent upsurge in military coups - September 2023 - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/reports/africa-recent-upsurge-in-military-coups>