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World Watch Research

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# Nepal: Persecution Dynamics

January 2025



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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## 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/February).

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

Nepal: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
31,240,000	1,678,000	5.4

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

Nepal: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	1,678,000	5.4
Muslim	1,295,000	4.1
Hindu	20,080,000	64.3
Buddhist	3,842,000	12.3
Ethnic religionist	4,188,000	13.4
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	4,500	0.0
Atheist	17,100	0.1
Agnostic	95,400	0.3
Other	40,900	0.1
<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

Nepal: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Religious nationalism	Government officials, Non-Christian religious leaders, Violent religious groups, One's own (extended) family, Political parties, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, Ethnic group leaders
Clan oppression	Violent religious groups, One's own (extended) family, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, Government officials, Ethnic group leaders
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials

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

### Brief description of the persecution situation

Converts from Hinduism are put under most pressure as they are viewed as deviating from the faith of the ancestors. Converts (and members of non-traditional church communities) experience pressure from family, friends, community and local authorities. Roman Catholic churches and churches where expatriates gather experience the least problems. From time to time Hindu radicals take advantage of the ongoing political instability by attacking Christians - mostly with impunity. There have been reports of churches being attacked, of Christians being beaten, arrested and given prison sentences. There were also Christians who had to flee their homes and villages because of threats. In addition, there are legal restrictions at the national level - for instance, the 2017 anti-conversion legislation.

### Summary of international obligations and rights violations

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

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

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

- Christian converts experience pressure and violence from their family and community to renounce their faith (ICCPR Art. 18)
- Christian children are harassed because of their parents' faith (ICCPR Art. 18 and CRC Art. 14)
- Christians face discrimination in the workplace because of their faith (ICCPR Art. 26)
- Christians and their activities are monitored by the authorities and surrounding community (ICCPR Art. 17)



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

- **30 January 2024:** The Nepali Supreme Court sentenced Pastor Keshab Raj Acharya to one year's imprisonment for evangelism in 2021. He appealed to have the prison sentence converted into a fine. (Source: [Human Rights Without Frontiers, 30 January 2024](#))
- **2 March 2024:** In the night a mob of local residents attacked a church in Nepal's Lumbini province, throwing stones and bricks to break its glass windows. (Due to security concerns, no further details can be published.)
- **12 March 2024:** 11 Christians were arrested for evangelizing. (Due to security concerns, no further details can be published.)
- **15 June 2024:** A pastor was conducting a church service in Madhesh province, when a group known as Hindu Samrat Sena (HSS) entered and disrupted the service. The mob assaulted the pastor violently, threatened other Christians present, seized Bibles and destroyed musical instruments being used. (Source: OD Research)

## Specific examples of positive developments

- **December 2023:** A shelter for young girls who have faced gender-based violence has been set up by Catholic nuns in Hemja, located 212 kilometers northwest of Nepal's capital Kathmandu. Some 5,743 girls and women were victims of gender-based violence in the country in 2022. (Source: [UCAN, 15 January 2024](#))
- **March 2024:** Nepal Sports Fellowship organized an Easter Gospel program in Lalitpur for national and international players and honored the runners-up of the WAF Women's Championship team. (Source: [Nepal Church, 31 March 2024](#))

## Christian communities and how they are affected

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** These are mainly foreigners in Nepal who have their own, isolated meetings. They are hardly active in evangelism. The Constitution of Nepal has created difficulties for expatriate Christians, since foreign missionaries are not allowed to enter Nepal for religious purposes. If foreign visitors are found to be involved in evangelistic activities, they are immediately deported back to their respective home country.

**Historical Christian communities:** By far the largest and most important of these is the Roman Catholic Church, plus a few Orthodox communities. They tend not to be involved in evangelistic activities. As a result, these communities are much less exposed to hostilities from radical Hindus.

**Converts to Christianity:** Christians from a Hindu background make up the largest group of Christians in Nepal and their numbers have continued to grow fast over the years. They are facing the highest levels of persecution of all Christians in Nepal, with much pressure coming from local government officials, Hindu priests, family and community.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** These mostly consist of independent churches. Converts from Hinduism will usually go to churches belonging to this category. As these churches are also very active in evangelism, they experience high levels of persecution.

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

There are no hotspots of persecution of Christians in Nepal, but pressure on converts is stronger in the countryside than in urban areas.

## Position on the World Watch List

Nepal: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	63	54
WWL 2024	62	53
WWL 2023	61	55
WWL 2022	64	48
WWL 2021	66	34

Nepal's increase in total score was due to the score of violence increasing from 4.4 in WWL 2024 to 5.9 points in WWL 2025. *Religious nationalism (blended with Clan oppression)* dominates in most *spheres of life*, while medium-level *Dictatorial paranoia* affects the *National and Church spheres of life*. Both engines 'meet' each other in the *Community sphere of life*. Converts from Hinduism are put under most pressure as they are viewed as deviating from the faith of the ancestors. Most pressure comes from radical Hindus and is highest in the *National, Church and Private spheres of life*. Violence by radical Hindus targeting Christians continued with churches being damaged, Christians being arrested, physically harassed and with well over 200 being forced to leave their homes.

## Persecution engines

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

*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.*

**Religious nationalism - Hindu (Strong)**

Most of the persecution of Christians in Nepal comes from Hindu radical groups who want to turn Nepal back into a Hindu state. These radical Hindu groups have close ties with Hindutva groups in neighboring India. Persecution used not to be driven by government, but since 2015 a new constitution has been adopted, limiting freedom of religion and anti-conversion legislation strongly affecting Christian evangelism was signed into law in 2017.

**Clan oppression (Strong) - blended with Religious nationalism - Hindu**

In the context of Nepal, most Christians are from a Hindu background. If a convert in a radical Hindu family is found to be practicing Christian worship, he or she is likely to face pressure and violence and be expelled from their home. Furthermore, they are not allowed to inherit property.

**Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)**

Nepal does not have a powerful, dictatorial government, but state agents are becoming more strict, especially at the local level.

**Drivers of persecution**

Nepal: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	WEAK	STRONG	-	STRONG	-	WEAK	VERY WEAK	MEDIUM	-
Government officials	-	Strong	-	Medium	-	Very weak	-	Strong	-
Ethnic group leaders	-	Medium	-	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Christian religious leaders	Weak	Strong	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Religious leaders of other churches	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Violent religious groups	-	Strong	-	Strong	-	-	-	Weak	-

(table continues below)

Nepal: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	WEAK	STRONG	-	STRONG	-	WEAK	VERY WEAK	MEDIUM	-
Ideological pressure groups	-	-	-	-	-	Medium	Very weak	Very weak	-
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Weak	Medium	-	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
One's own (extended) family	Weak	Strong	-	Strong	-	-	-	-	-
Political parties	-	Medium	-	-	-	Weak	-	Very weak	-
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Organized crime cartels or networks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.) and embassies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

**Drivers of Religious nationalism - Hindu:**

- **Government officials (Strong):** At the national level, the anti-conversion legislation puts government officials against Christians. At national, provincial and local government levels, officials often have connections to the Hindu community. They may be influenced to impose restrictions on religious freedom which can lead to the arrest and harassment of Christians.

- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** Hindu leaders will at any level (local, provincial and national) try to exert influence and restrictions on other religions. As a result, the level of violence has gone up in Nepal in recent years.
- **Violent religious groups (Strong):** There are several radical Hindu groups and parties that are influenced by their counterparts in India. Their activities and influence is growing.
- **Extended family (Strong):** Converts to Christianity are often under intensive pressure from their families to return to the faith of the ancestors.
- **Ethnic or Clan group leaders (Medium):** Especially in the northern and extreme southern regions of Nepal ethnic group leaders have displayed religious intolerance. This has resulted in several incidents targeting Christian evangelists, pastors or newly planted churches.
- **Normal citizens (Medium):** At the community level especially, Hindus will impose pressure on converts and other Christians.
- **Political parties (Medium):** There are at least two Hindu political parties in the national parliament in favor of turning Nepal into a Hindu nation again.

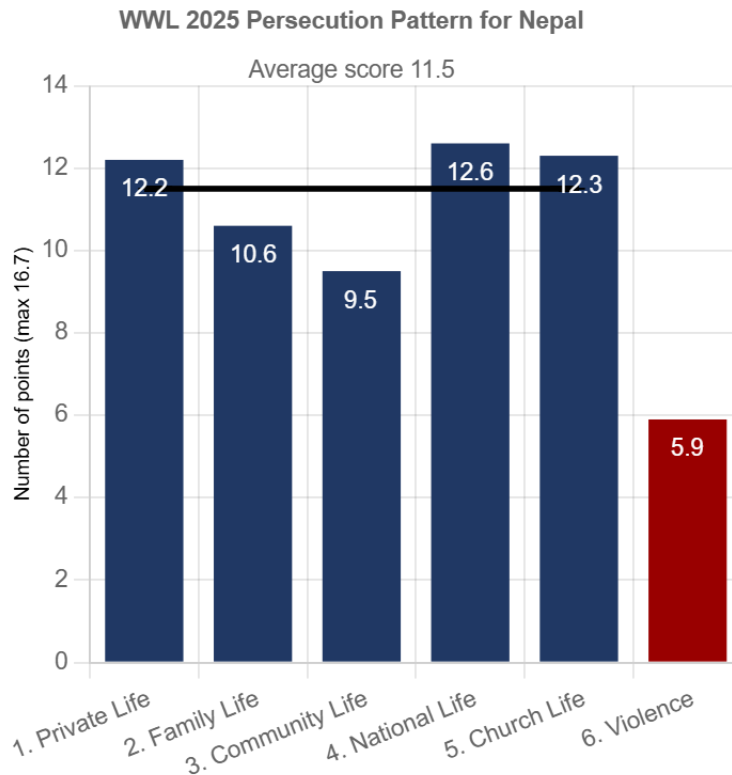
#### **Drivers of Clan oppression, often blended with Religious nationalism:**

- **Violent religious groups (Strong):** There are a number of Hindu radical groups and parties that are influenced by their counterparts in India. In their eyes, Christianity is a religion that should not exist in Nepal.
- **Extended family (Strong):** Converts to Christianity are often under intensive pressure from their families to return to the faith of the ancestors.
- **Government officials (Medium):** Local government agents (at the community level) will oppose Christian activities in their areas.
- **Ethnic or Clan group leaders (Medium):** Tribal Hindu leaders, especially in the northern and extreme southern regions of Nepal, have displayed religious intolerance. This has resulted in several incidents targeting Christian evangelists, pastors or newly planted churches. This is strongly linked to *Religious nationalism*.
- **Normal citizens (Medium):** At the community level, ordinary Hindu citizens will impose pressure on converts and other Christians.

#### **Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia:**

- **Government officials (Strong):** This does not happen so much at the national level, but at the local (and sometimes also at provincial) level government officials are often influenced by the Hindu community and may use their position to harass and arrest Christians.

## The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2025 Persecution pattern for Nepal shows:

- The average pressure on Christians is at a very high level (11.5 points), the same score as in WWL 2024. Hindu pressure on Christians (especially against converts) is present at all levels of society, ranging from the personal level all the way up to the national and church levels. Christians experience opposition to conversions and baptisms constantly. Anti-conversion legislation has been imposed since 2017.
- The three *spheres of life* with the highest scores are *National, Church and Private spheres of life*. These are the spheres where Hindu pressure is most evident.
- The score for violence reached 5.9 points in WWL 2025, an increase compared to the 4.4 points in WWL 2024.

## Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

*In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four 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.). (3.50 points)***

Revealing one's Christian faith is equal to evangelism in the eyes of Hindu radicals. This will be opposed, sometimes violently. At first this was limited to family homes in the countryside, but today social media has taken the issue all over Nepal.

***Block 1.8: It has been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those other than immediate family (extended family, others). (3.50 points)***

Speaking about Christian faith outside the immediate family is regarded as a form of evangelism by Hindus. Members of the extended family, friends and the community will oppose Christians who do this; the latter need to be very careful.

***Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to own or keep Christian materials. (3.25 points)***

The family, friends and community members have stepped up their opposition to Christians owning religious materials. At first this happened primarily in the countryside and affected mostly converts in their families, but over the past few years the danger has grown. Now it also affects other Christians all over Nepal as these materials are very likely to be viewed as tools for evangelism by Hindu radicals.

***Block 1.1: Conversion has been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another. (3.00 points)***

Hindu opposition to conversion to Christianity is growing in Nepal. Under the influence of Hindu radicals in India, Hindus in Nepal are becoming more violent against converts and any Christians active in evangelism. Because of this growing aversion, the Constitution of Nepal was adapted in 2015 with Article 26 effectively forbidding conversion by law.

## Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

***Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (3.75 points)***

Baptism is regarded as the final sign that one has left Hinduism to become a Christian. Many Christians realize that baptism can lead to a severe reaction from family and community and will either refrain from being baptized or have this done secretly. Pressure on Christians has grown to such an extent that baptismal services are held in secret in churches.

***Block 2.5: Burials of Christians have been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites. (3.50 points)***

The Hindu and Buddhist tradition in Nepal is to cremate people when they die. There are no common burial grounds so the only places where Christians can be buried is in a very few privately owned places - but even then there will be opposition from locals. Some families travelled to India to conduct burials of Catholics who had died in Nepal.

***Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (3.25 points)***

Even though the country is now officially secular, Hindu practices and customs are deeply embedded in the education system. Children of non-Hindu faiths will routinely find themselves participating in Hindu customs as part of school activities. For instance, the daily prayers in schools are recited to a Hindu goddess of learning, Saraswati. The school curriculum teaches about Hindu festivals and cultural practices. There is no pressure to participate in these activities and there is no government agenda as such to establish any Hindu monopoly through these activities. However, the all-round presence of a majority religion or culture in day-to-day life and the inability of schools to develop an inclusive outlook can lead children from religious minorities to feel alienated.

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

In Nepal, many grandparents who are not Christians try to raise their grandchildren according to their old traditions. They force them to follow old rituals and celebrate Hindu or Buddhist festivals. They persuade their grandchildren to worship idols and tell them not to go church. In such cases, parents who are Christians have difficulty in raising their children according to Christian faith and values. Local people are also likely to hinder converts in raising their children according to Christian beliefs.

### **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.). (3.25 points)***

At the community level, Christians (especially converts) are often threatened by their family or members of the community. Christian house meetings are regularly disturbed and obstructed. Unmarried Christians are often harassed for not following the Hindu tradition and rituals.

***Block 3.10: Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)***

Christians in government service, and especially those in the armed forces have been discriminated against. In general, Christians in public employment are not given fair opportunities or given the chance of attaining promotion. Private non-Christian organizations also discriminate against Christians in matters of employment and promotion. Instead, less qualified Hindus (or people of another religion) are usually given the opportunities that arise.

***Block 3.4: Christians have been hindered in sharing community resources. (3.00 points)***

In some rural areas, Christians are socially boycotted and are not allowed to use community resources. In a recent incident, Buddhists living in a camp for earthquake-displaced persons did not allow Christians to share water from the same water-supply; two separate water-systems had to be created. In two villages near Lamjung, Christians were not allowed to draw water; this has been the case in several other villages too.



***Block 3.13: Christians have been interrogated or compelled to report to the local vigilante/police for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)***

Local councils and the police often require Christians to come to their offices for questioning and report on their church activities.

## **Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere**

***Block 4.1: The Constitution (or comparable national or state law) limits freedom of religion as formulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (4.00 points)***

Nepal is a secular state and the Constitution guarantees religious freedom, which means people can officially practice their religion and culture freely. However, conversion from one religion to another is prohibited. The new criminal code of Nepal, which came into effect in August 2017, also prohibits religious behavior that disrupts public order or goes contrary to public morality. Hence, while the law generally remains positive, there is the possibility that these new provisions can be used to target and punish members of minority groups.

***Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated when engaging with the authorities. (3.75 points)***

Some officials or government representative treat people differently when they find out they are Christians or belong to other religious minorities. This reaction is mostly influenced by local religious groups. The refusal of local authorities to grant burial access to Christian communities despite a Supreme Court ruling is an example of such discrimination.

***Block 4.14: Those who have caused harm to Christians have been left unpunished. (3.75 points)***

No action is taken against those who harass or intimidate Christians - particularly at the local level. This is especially true in the case of Hindu extremist elements.

***Block 4.9: Christian civil society organizations and/or political parties have been hindered. (3.50 points)***

In 2018/2019 new rules were introduced to regulate the activities of NGOs operating in Nepal. According to these regulations, NGOs require approval for each project that they run. Local authorities are required to ban any projects which look as if they might be used for proselytizing. For instance, Christian organizations have been forced to remove any biblical or Christian words from their documentation prior to applying. Those who do not do so are unable to acquire registration. Christian NGOs face harassment by local authorities who often claim that they engage in unethical conversion.

## **Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere**

***Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (4.00 points)***

There is no legal recognition of churches in Nepal. Church property is registered under the name of private persons or NGOs. There is no provision for registering churches.

**Block 5.18: Churches have been hindered in establishing, managing, maintaining and conducting schools, or charitable, humanitarian, medical, social or cultural organizations, institutions and associations. (4.00 points)**

Christian NGOs and other social service organizations have been placed under heavy restrictions. Pressure is especially focused on charitable work as there is always the suspicion of conversion activities taking place. There are examples of organizations that were requested to remove Christian references in their documents, including prefaces stating which Christian communities originally founded the charity.

**Block 5.7: Churches have been hindered from openly integrating converts. (3.75 points)**

Conversion is strictly forbidden (see above: Question 1.1). Integrating converts into a church is therefore also forbidden. Apart from the legal point of view, there is also family and community pressure against converts and any churches accepting them.

**Block 5.20: It has been risky for churches or Christian organizations to speak out against instigators of persecution. (3.75 points)**

If the instigators of persecution are government officials or police (mostly at the local level), speaking out against them could result in heavier punishment. If the instigators are Hindu radicals or local community members it is also useless to speak out as most of these people have strong ties with those in power.

## 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.*

Nepal: 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)?	0	0
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?	5	3
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	19	10
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?	1	0
6.5 How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	0	0
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	0	4
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	10 *	9
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?	10 *	10

*(table continues below)*

Nepal: Violence scores per Block 6 question in questionnaire	WWL 2025	WWL 2024
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?	1	1
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	232	21
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	12	1

In the WWL 2025 reporting period:

- **Churches and public Christian properties attacked:** Sources reported that 5 churches were attacked in the Terain region.
- **Christians detained:** At least 19 Christians were arrested, among them at least 9 foreign Christians.
- **Christians sentenced:** 1. One pastor (see above: *Specific examples of violations in the reporting period*) was sentenced to prison, accused of proselytization.
- **Christians attacked:** At least 30 Christians were physically attacked and/or mentally abused for faith related reasons. Many of these incidents occurred in rural settings at the hands of neighbors, society and other religious groups.
- **Christian houses or properties damaged:** At least 20, for faith-related reasons.
- **Christian shops attacked:** In February 2024, a shop owned by a Christian was forced to close in Lumbini province.
- **Christians forced to leave their homes:** Sources reported that at least 232 Christians were forced to leave either their homes or villages.
- **Christians forced to leave the country:** At least 12 Christians were forced to leave Nepal.

## 5 Year trends

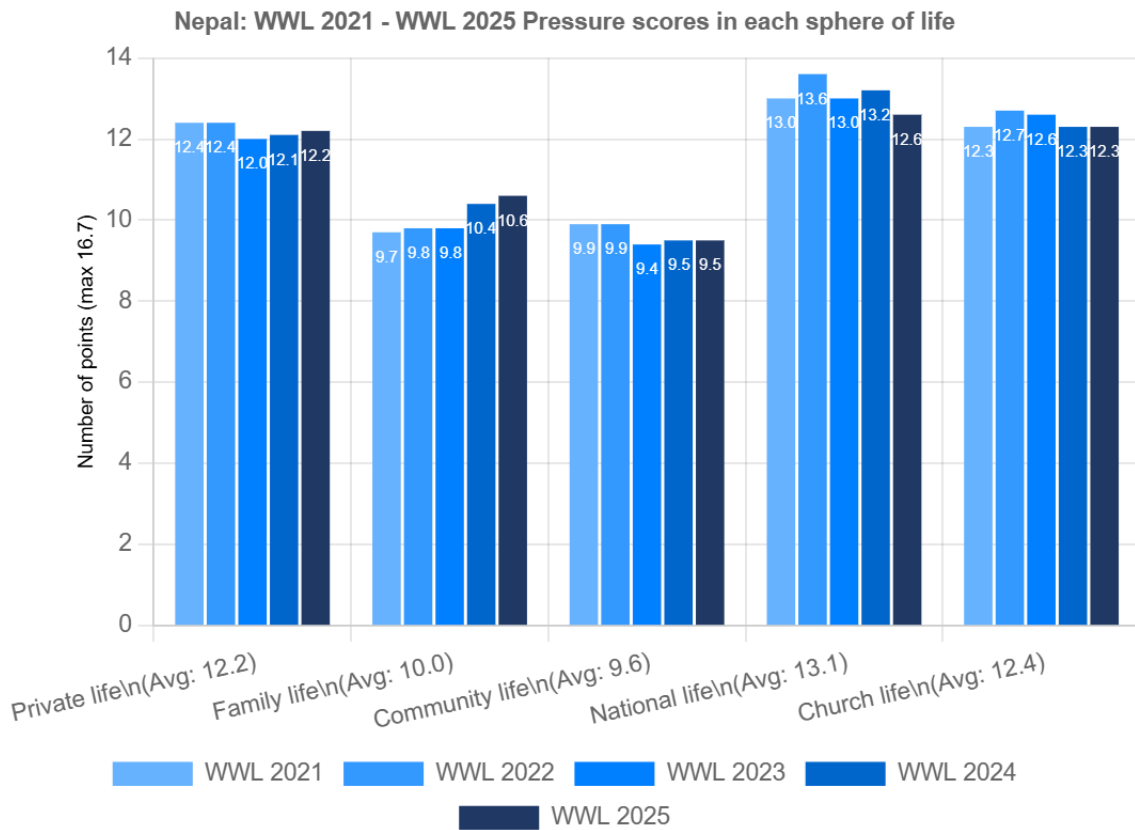
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

### 5 Year trends: Average pressure

As can be seen in the table below, the average pressure on Christians in Nepal has remained more or less stable within the range 11.3 - 11.7 points. Hindu pressure on Christians in Nepal is categorized as 'very high' but it is still much lower than in neighboring India.

Nepal: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025		Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025		11.5
2024		11.5
2023		11.3
2022		11.7
2021		11.4

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



Over the past five WWL reporting periods, pressure has been highest in the *National, Church and Private spheres of life*. The political turmoil in Nepal since 2022 has meant a decrease in state pressure. But at the local level, the influence of radicalized Hindus is growing.

## 5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



Violence against Christians in Nepal reached its highest point in WWL 2021, when 8.5 points were scored. In WWL 2022-2024 the scores went down markedly. This trend ended in WWL 2025 when the score for violence went up again to 5.9 points (but still considerably lower than in WWL 2021).

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Although the multi-cultural society of Nepal was granted religious freedom in the 2015 Constitution, anti-conversion and blasphemy laws continue to remain in place. It is dangerous for converts to Christianity to reveal their faith. When their faith becomes known, female converts face a multiplicity of pressures. The immediate family members of female Christian converts may lock them up, often depriving them of basic needs and financial support, as well as restricting their contact with social networks and other Christians. Families may also make arrangements to marry their daughters to a non-Christian man. Within such marriages, women are highly pressurized to leave their Christian faith. A country expert explains that “as the boy’s family are considered to be dominant in Nepal, girls who are Christian have to suffer a lot if she is married to a Hindu” or to a person belonging to another religion.

For women converts who are forced into marriage, this is often a gateway to other forms of persecution pressure being applied. A country expert states: “Intensity is very high because when married to non-Christian, the threat to their faith becomes very high. It is difficult to get out of the marital bond after marriage. ... [W]hen a stand is taken, it normally results in physical assault, starvation, house arrest, abandonment and divorce.” Psychological pressure to participate in Hindu or other rituals is also common, for example fasting for their husband’s long life, and following restrictions during menstruation.

If a woman is already married at the point of conversion and her husband is not supportive of her faith, she is unlikely to be aware of the legal possibilities for defending herself and her children, and may be forcefully divorced. There were a number of cases in the previous reporting period (WWL 2024) of men leaving their wives upon discovering that they had become a Christian. Christian women and girls are also vulnerable to sexual violence, and may be harassed or raped for faith-related reasons.

In the historically Hindu and culturally patriarchal society of Nepal, women and girls have less ability to exercise their rights, face difficulty in accessing education and are often limited to care and household work. Dalit and religious minority women in particular face increased disadvantages. Perhaps the most difficult aspect for those who convert to Christianity in Nepal is the persistency of the harassment, be it physical, emotional or sexual; such pressure can be unrelenting.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Christian men and boys are most vulnerable to persecution if they are recent converts, in public service, or leaders of non-traditional church groups. Converts are often socially outcast, denied access to ancestral property by immediate family members and denied basic legal rights to a birth certificate and citizenship by local government administrators. Furthermore, known converts face harassment in public places such as markets and the workplace.

Local non-traditional church leaders are the main targets of harassment for faith-related reasons. A country expert explains that “as they are the one to engage in active gospel preaching, baptizing new believers, and counselling new believers, they are often targeted by angry non-Christian family members of new converts, by the religious group of the other religion, or by anti-Christian-minded people.” Hindu radicals will focus their attacks on church leaders firstly to set an example to other Christians in the area, and secondly because they are regarded as being the main actors behind the increasing number of Christian conversions. An expert explains: “Ethnic group leaders, especially in the northern and extreme southern regions of Nepal, have displayed religious intolerance. This resulted in several incidents, which were aimed to persecute Christian evangelists, pastors or newly planted churches.” Pastors have been threatened with physical assault and on some occasions, forced to leave their communities ([BBC News, 14 January 2023](#)). Exemplifying the dangers, in May 2021 a church leader was falsely accused of drug-smuggling and was kept in custody for 48 days where he was physically and mentally abused by police. Because of the severity of the beating, he became paralyzed. There have also been reports of male Christian pastors being followed when they leave their homes and then being threatened and violently beaten by groups of youths.

In the Nepalese army, government positions and police-force, Christians can be forced to worship Hindu gods and observe Hindu festivals. This includes eating food offered to idols or putting vermilion powder on their heads during the Hindu festivities. Particularly for members of the armed forces who are Christian, not participating in these rituals opens them up to experiencing verbal abuse and negative treatment.

When Christian men and boys are severely beaten and socially ostracized, they have fewer economic opportunities for supporting the family. Most men and older boys are the providers for the family, so this form of discrimination means that the whole family faces both economic trouble and social insecurity.

## Persecution of other religious minorities

According to the US State Department ([IRFR 2023 Nepal](#)):

- “According to the Center for Education and Human Resource Development, which is under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, the number of registered gumbas (Buddhist centers of learning) increased to 92 from 61 in 2022. There were 110 registered gurukhuls (Hindu centers of learning), compared with 79 in 2022.”
- “According to the Center for Education and Human Resource Development, 1,063 madrassahs were registered with district education offices, compared with 1,014 in 2022. Some Muslim leaders stated approximately 2,000 full-time madrassahs continued to be unregistered. According to religious leaders, many madrassahs, as well as full-time Buddhist and Hindu schools, continued to operate as unregistered entities because school operators hoped to avoid government audits and having to use the Center for Education and Human Resource Development's established curriculum. They said some schools also wished to avoid the registration process, which they characterized as cumbersome.”
- “According to the DNF [Dalit NGO Federation], during the year [2023] some Hindu priests and what the NGO said were 'high caste' residents continued to discriminate against Dalits as 'low caste'. The DNF reported at least five incidents of caste discrimination against Dalits in Hindu temples took place as of September 2023. One incident included a Dalit couple prevented from getting married inside Hindu Malika Temple in Bajura District in May. According the DNF, a Hindu priest closed the temple door and prevented the couple from entering due to their 'low caste'.”

International Christian Concern released a [report outlining the declining state of religious freedom in Nepal](#) on 9 November 2023:

- “Christians and other religious minorities face the combined threat of social attack and legal ostracization in a system that fails to treat them as equal members of society.”

## Trends Summary

### 1) Christianity has been growing rapidly

Nepal is a poor, land-locked country, wedged between India and China, and its politics are deeply divided. Despite all the problems, however, Nepal is slowly making progress; the economy is improving and the high level of poverty is being reduced little by little. Christianity is also growing rapidly, which is a cause of concern for radical Hindus since most converts to Christianity come from a Hindu background.

### 2) Hindu radicals have been able to attack non-Hindus with impunity

Compared to its neighbor India, the number of reported violent incidents against Christians in Nepal is relatively low, but increased again in WWL 2025. In the past months and years there have been several threats, arrests, physical harassment, damage to churches and Christian homes and the expulsion of foreign Christians. Under the current circumstances, radical Hindu elements have been able to continue and increase their attacks against non-Hindus with impunity. So far, the government of Nepal has undertaken no measures to counter this. The call to have Nepal revert to being a Hindu kingdom has grown in influence, boosted by the April 2024 demonstrations.



### 3) The political situation remains unstable

Observers are waiting to see whether the recent levels of political instability will continue. In 2020, a split within the Communist party seriously affected the coalition government which took power in 2018. This did not change even after Prime Minister Oli was removed from office by the Supreme Court in July 2021 and was replaced by Congress party leader Deuba. The ruling coalition that took over power after parliamentary elections in November 2022 did not generate confidence that the period of political instability was over. In May 2024, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal faced the fourth vote of confidence since his appointment in 2022. Then, for the third time in a year, on 1 July 2024 a new government was formed after the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) joined hands with the Nepali Congress (NC), effectively ousting PM Dahal. K P Oli of the UML and Sher Bahadur Deuba of the NC are taking turns being prime minister for 18 months each until the next election is held in 2027. Again, only time will tell if stability will now return to the political scene (Source: [Nepali Times, 2 July 2024](#)).

### 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/>.

### External Links

- Copyright, sources and definitions: Background country information - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-background/>
- Copyright, sources and definitions: Persecution dynamics - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/country-dossiers/>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
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- 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: Human Rights Without Frontiers, 30 January 2024 - <https://hrwf.eu/nepal-pastor-must-begin-prison-term-for-praying-and-evangelizing/>
- Specific examples of positive developments: UCAN, 15 January 2024 - <https://www.ucanews.com/news/catholic-nuns-help-vulnerable-nepalese-girls-get-a-new-life/103822>
- Specific examples of positive developments: Nepal Church, 31 March 2024 - <https://nepalchurch.com/29175/%E0%A4%87%E0%A4%B8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%9F%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%95%E0%A5%8B-%E0%A4%85%E0%A4%B5%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE-%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%AA%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B2-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AA/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: BBC News, 14 January 2023 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-64235873>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Nepal - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/nepal/>

- Persecution of other religious minorities: report outlining the declining state of religious freedom in Nepal - <https://www.persecution.org/2023/11/09/icc-release-report-on-religious-freedom-decline-in-nepal/>
- Trends Summary: Nepali Times, 2 July 2024 - <https://nepalitimes.com/news/nepal-government-changes-again>