

World Watch Research

Yemen:

# Background Information

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**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

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## Copyright and sources

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).

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## Map of country



Yemen: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
35,220,000	a small number	OD estimate

## Recent history

In 1990 clan-based North Yemen and Communist South Yemen merged after years of armed conflict. In the North, tribal violence has persisted and the prominent Houthi clan is fighting for the restoration of Shia rule and for action against government corruption. Since the ousting of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2012, Yemen has seen political turmoil and sporadic violence. In the power vacuum, militants and rebels - including groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group (IS) - are fighting to gain control of territory.

As reported by Freedom House ([Global Freedom Index 2023 Yemen](#)):

- "Yemen ... has been devastated by a civil war involving regional powers since 2015. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and their allies intervened that year to support the government of President Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi against Ansar Allah (Supporters of God), also known as the Houthis—an armed rebel movement that is rooted in the Zaidi Shiite community, which forms a large minority concentrated in northwestern Yemen. The civilian population has suffered from direct violence by both sides, as well as from hunger and disease caused by the interruption of trade and aid. Elections are long overdue, normal political activity has halted, and many state institutions have ceased to function."

Since mid-September 2021, there have been many public demonstrations in the south, often leading to street violence. This civil unrest is mainly driven by the deterioration of living conditions due to rising prices, which have made basic necessities such as food virtually unaffordable for many. On 1 April 2022, a two month truce came into effect between the two main warring parties - the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels on one side, and the Saudi-led coalition forces (including the Yemeni government) on the other. This truce has made it possible for President Hadi to officially hand over his duties to an eight-member presidential council at a ceremony on 19 April 2022 in Aden. The truce was extended twice but was broken multiple times by both sides and finally came to an end in early October 2022 when the warring parties rejected a UN proposal to once again extend and expand the agreement. Meanwhile, Houthi representatives and Saudi Arabia have been holding "[back-channel negotiations](#)" in Oman, independent of the UN peace process, thus undermining the presidential council (International Crisis Group, November 2022).

In April 2023, the first Saudi diplomatic visit to Yemen in eight years accelerated peace talks and both parties exchanged hundreds of prisoners, raising hopes for a comprehensive agreement to end hostilities. In the months that followed, negotiations continued to stall, with rising hopes for a breakthrough in new talks in the second half of 2023. During the relative calm, the Houthi rebels have reportedly stepped up their military capabilities, recruited children and strengthened ties with Iran. It has also given them more bandwidth to enforce limits on freedom of speech, expression and mobility while simultaneously imposing their sectarian ideas on society. Meanwhile, tensions continued, leading to renewed calls for a separate southern state by the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in September 2023. Finally, the Houthis launched long-range missiles and drones targeting Israel in October 2023 and threatened with further attacks, possibly intending to expand the war between Israel and Hamas as well as potentially jeopardizing Yemen's peace process.

From November 2023 onwards, the Houthis escalated their [attacks on Israeli, US and UK-linked shipping](#) in the Red Sea, with the US and UK launching airstrikes against Houthi targets (UN News, 24 July 2024). The USA also re-designated the Houthis as a terrorist organization. Fighting against government-backed forces in the south also continued (see below: *Security situation*), while a new Houthi currency deepened the economic divide ([Middle East Monitor](#), 1 April 2024). In May and June 2024, the Houthis announced a new phase of escalation in the Red Sea crisis with indications of a possible offensive in Marib and Sana'a governates. Also in June 2024, the Houthis arrested at least 35 employees from [UN agencies and international humanitarian organizations](#), including women, in a widespread crackdown on foreign humanitarian assistance. According to reports, the detentions, carried out by the Houthi group's security and intelligence service, involved torture and allegations of espionage (Human Rights Watch, 26 June 2024).

## Political and legal landscape

Yemen is an Islamic republic and Sharia (Islamic law) is the principal source of law. The government has one legislative chamber, which is - in theory - elected every six years. The last parliamentary elections were in 2003 and a presidential election was held in 2012 in which the outgoing president was the only candidate. Due to the civil war, fresh elections are not expected to be held in the short-term. The Economist Intelligence Unit classifies the Yemeni government as 'authoritarian' ([EIU 2023](#)).

According to the US State Department ([IRFR 2023 - Executive Summary](#)):

- "Government control was limited in much of the country's territory, which constrained its ability to address abuses of religious freedom, including those that security personnel, tribal leaders, or local military commanders committed in areas under its nominal control."
- "During the year [2023], the Houthis continued to control approximately one-third of the country's territory, including 70 to 80 percent of the population. The NGO Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported 90 percent of the 1,100 recorded religious repression events that occurred in the country from January 2020 to March 2022 took place in Houthi-controlled areas. ACLED stated most Houthi repression involved 'moral policing', imposing Houthi ideology on the religious and educational sectors, and extracting religious 'taxes'. The Houthis disproportionately targeted non-Muslim religious minorities but also suppressed Sunni-leaning rituals."

Advocacy organization [Middle East Concern](#) reports on Yemen (accessed 29 July 2024):

- "The rule of law is weak in Yemen, with some variations in practice according to tribal traditions and differing interpretations of Islamic law. Yemen's constitution of 1994 establishes Islam as the state religion and Islamic law as the sole source of all legislation. The constitution upholds the principle of non-discrimination, protects freedom of thought and expression of opinion, and establishes the inviolability of places of worship, all within the limits of the law. Blasphemy, defamation of religions and non-Islamic proselytizing are prohibited. Apostasy is a criminal offence, punishable by death for apostates who refuse to recant. Islamic personal status laws apply, including a prohibition on marriage between a Muslim and an apostate and between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man."
- "[T]here is no formal registration process for non-Islamic religious groups and the government has not authorized construction of non-Islamic places of worship for many years."

Some Yemeni Christians have been accused of blasphemy and arrested. Also in the WWL 2024 reporting period, Christians were detained for both religious and non-religious reasons. The power of the Houthis has expanded further in their quest to restore rule according to the Shiite Zaydi Imamate - which existed in the country until 1962. With the growing Houthi influence, the situation for the Christians has deteriorated further. The few migrant Christians who are left are legally free to conduct non-Islamic worship in private, but due to the civil war this has not happened for years. On account of the fighting, most expatriates, including Christians, have left Yemen.

### **Gender perspective**

The legal landscaping facing women and girls is additionally restrictive. Female representation in parliament is currently non-existent, with no seats being held by women as of 2022, down from 0.3% of seats in 2020 ([Index Mundi, accessed 12 June 2023](#)). Yemen acceded to the CEDAW Convention in 1984 and unlike other countries following Sharia law, made no reservations to any articles concerning gender equality. However, the CEDAW committee has consistently challenged Yemen's lack of compliance with its provisions, particularly in relation to marriage ([CEDAW, 2021](#)). While Article 23 of the 1992 Personal Status code indicates that a bride must give consent to marry, she is not allowed to sign her own wedding contract. Silence is deemed sufficient consent, making women and

girls vulnerable to forced marriages. Yemen's Personal Status Code also fails to specify a minimum age of marriage; An estimated 32% of girls are married before the age of 18 ([Girls Not Brides Yemen](#) - accessed 29 July 2024). Neither marital rape nor domestic violence are specifically criminalized in Yemeni law ([HRW, 7 February 2020](#)).

## Religious landscape

The Open Doors estimate for the number of Yemeni Christians in the country is "a small number". The pre-civil war number of Christians was approximately 40,000 when there was still a significant Christian expatriate community. After most of them left the country as a result of the escalating war, tolerance of dissenters has declined. According to WCD statistics (accessed May 2024), over 99% of the population are Muslim. There is also a significant Hindu minority of approximately 233,000 adherents, mostly immigrants from India and Nepal. At present Christians are a tiny minority, consisting of Yemeni Christians of Muslim background, refugees and migrant workers. Proselytism of Muslims and conversion are both officially illegal; if a convert is discovered, he/she will be forced by the local Islamic community to report their conversion to the authorities. This naturally deters converts to Christianity from making their religion known in public in any way.

Muslim citizens have more rights than the followers of other religions. The country abides by very strict interpretations of Islam. Leaving Islam to convert to another religion is forbidden both by Islamic and state law. If their new faith is discovered, converts may face the death penalty, although this is generally not implemented by the government but rather by radical Muslims, with the government turning a blind eye. Though focusing most of their attention on political events, government officials continue to intimidate Christians even amid the chaotic war situation. Oppression has mostly been felt coming from Islamic militants who have considerable freedom to operate.

According to [Middle East Concern's report on Yemen](#) (accessed 29 July 2024):

- "The ongoing conflict, political instability and humanitarian crisis profoundly affects all in Yemen. Additional pressures faced by Christians come principally from non-state actors, given the weak application of the rule of law in many parts of the country. Those who choose to leave Islam are likely to face strong family and societal pressure, which in extreme cases can include violent responses from family members. While apostates face the possible death penalty under the Criminal Code, there have been no known examples of judicial executions for apostasy in recent years. However, there are occasional verified reports of extra-judicial murders for apostasy by community or extremist groups."
- "The threat from violent Islamic militants is significant in parts of Yemen where groups such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsular (AQAP) and the Islamic State group are strong, especially for nationals who have left Islam." This applies even more to Houthi militants, as one country expert explained: 'Their version of Islam has even more impact on Christians than the aforementioned groups'."

## Economic landscape

According to [UNDP's Human Development Report Yemen](#) (data updates as of 13 March 2024):

- "Yemen's HDI value for 2022 is 0.424— which put the country in the Low human development category—positioning it at 186 out of 193 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2022, Yemen's HDI value changed from 0.357 to 0.424, a change of 18.8 percent. Between 1990 and 2022, Yemen's life expectancy at birth changed by 5.0 years, expected years of schooling changed by 2.5 years and mean years of schooling changed by 2.5 years. Yemen's GNI per capita changed by about -53.8 percent between 1990 and 2022."

According to the World Bank's [Yemen Macro Poverty Outlook](#) (accessed 29 July 2024):

- "Amid the blockade of the IRG's oil exports by the Houthis and conflict in the Middle East, Yemen navigates between glimpses of hope and a grim reality. The national economic rebound in 2022 was short-lived, with 2023 witnessing a sharp 24 percent decline in GDP per capita. Consequently, widespread poverty and food insecurity are estimated to have intensified. The outlook remains uncertain, due to stalled peace negotiations and regional conflict."

According to [World Bank Yemen overview](#): (update: 25 January 2024):

- As of early 2024, around 21.6 million Yemenis (two-thirds of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance due to the conflict.
- Over 17 million people face food insecurity, with 3.5 million experiencing severe malnutrition.
- Approximately 18 million Yemenis lack access to safe water and sanitation facilities. As a result, the country frequently faces recurring epidemics of diseases that could have been avoided, such as cholera, diphtheria, measles, and dengue fever.

The ongoing heavy depreciation of the rial currency will lead to further deterioration of the financial situation for all Yemenis, including Christians, pushing them to desperate survival tactics. Reports indicate that the majority of the Yemeni Church find themselves either unemployed or otherwise without regular salaries, further exacerbating their vulnerability.

### Gender perspective

Women are typically more economically vulnerable in Yemen due to low education and employment rates, and poor financial inclusion ([GIWPS Yemen country profile](#), accessed 29 July 2024). Making it additionally challenging for women to gain economic independence, Yemeni women do not have equal [inheritance rights](#) to men (World Bank, Women, Business and The Law, 2022). Beyond this formal inequality – under Islamic law, daughters receive half the share that sons receive – widows have been reportedly denied their due inheritance and are sometimes forcibly married to another male within the family of the deceased, in order to ensure that property and wealth are kept within the family. Recent studies suggest that while women are largely underrepresented in the formal labor market ([World Bank Gender Data 2023](#)), their economic security is heavily linked to their financial utility of gold, which they typically receive at their wedding ([ACAPS, 11 April 2023](#)). Marrying girls off early is another financial strategy families affected by poverty and the conflict employ to survive ([UNICEF, 26 June 2020](#)).

## Social and cultural landscape

According to the [World Factbook Yemen](#) (accessed 29 July 2024):

- **Main ethnic groups:** predominantly Arab; but also Afro-Arab, South Asian, European.
- **Main languages:** Arabic (official); a distinct Socotri language is widely used on Socotra Island and Archipelago; Mahri is still fairly widely spoken in eastern Yemen.
- **Urban population:** 39.8% of total population (2023)
- **Literacy rate:** 70.1% for the total population. For women the literacy rate is 55%, for men 85.1% (2015, more recent data is not available).

According to [UNDP's Human Development Report Yemen](#) (data updates as of 13 March 2024):

- **Median age:** 19.1 years ([DataReportal](#), February 2024);
- **Education:** Mean years of schooling: 2.8 (2022). The mean years of schooling for girls is 1.8, while for boys this is 3.6 (2022). Over 4.5 million children in Yemen are out of school, which is a massive 39% of the country's school-age population. A staggering 44% of caregivers and children cited the necessity of contributing to their family's income as the driving force behind dropping out of school. The prevalence of child labor in Yemen is an escalating issue that jeopardizes the well-being and healthy development of the nation's youth. ([International Parliamentary Network for Education](#), 2 May 2024).
- **IDPs/Refugees:** an estimated 4.5 million Yemenis have been forced to flee their homes because of the crisis – over 75% of them are women and children ([UNHCR](#), March 2024). In addition, there are almost 97,000 refugees and asylum-seekers (2024).
- **Gender inequality:** With a score of 0.820, Yemen ranks highest on the Gender Inequality Index of 162 listed countries ([UNDP Gender Inequality Index 2022](#), last accessed 18 June 2024).
- **Child marriage:** 32% of women aged 20–24 who were first married or in union before age 18, and 9 per cent before age 15 according to data from the Yemen Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) from 2013 ([UNICEF](#), 2021)

Further information:

- **Unemployment rate:** 17.6%, according to [Global Economy](#), last accessed 18 June 2024)
- **Youth unemployment:** 32,9%, according to [Global Economy](#), last accessed 18 June 2024)
- **Malnutrition:** Yemen ranks third on the [Global Hunger Index 2023](#) with a score of 39.9 (last accessed 18 June 2024) and more than one-third of the population undernourished.
- **Child malnutrition, stunting (moderate or severe) (% under age 5):** 48.7%

Yemen ranks second in the [FFP Fragile States Index 2023](#) because of its continuing civil war and humanitarian disaster.

Overall, after nearly 9 years of conflict, Yemen's healthcare system in 2024 remains extremely fragile, underfunded and overstretched, struggling to provide even basic services to large portions of the population amid shortages of resources and staff. Only 54% of health facilities across Yemen are fully functional, while 40% are partially functional and 6% are non-functional ([WHO](#), December 2023).

The situation for Christians is extremely difficult, not least due to the fact that society in Yemen is conservative, Muslim and strongly tribal. Even before the civil war began, the central government had

always been a secondary institution to the traditional ways of tribal governance. The government has also not been likely to intervene in intertribal conflicts, even if tribes were physically harming or imprisoning rival members. Tribal law and custom prohibit members of the tribe from leaving the tribe, which only occurs very rarely. The punishment for this would often be death or banishment.

Christians in the country attest that the increase in anarchy, the humanitarian crisis caused by war, natural disasters and diseases like cholera all contribute to the challenges they experience in trying to care for each other and contribute to society. The fact that Westerners (Christians) or other foreigners were blamed for importing the COVID-19 virus added to an already dangerously polarized and hostile environment for Christians. In addition, there were several smear campaigns through news agencies, social media and radio, to 'warn' the population against Christians in the country. Also, Christian organizations that provide humanitarian aid were accused of doing so in order to lure people to their faith.

### Gender perspective

Decades of fighting in Yemen have contributed to a higher number of female-led households ([The New Humanitarian, 5 January 2023](#)). Yemen has, however, long been viewed as one of the worst countries to live in as a woman in terms of political empowerment, economic participation, educational attainment, and entrenched social inequalities as pertain to gender ([Amnesty International, 16 December 2019](#)). In addition to the ongoing civil war, economic collapse and natural disasters, the crisis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic placed further challenges on Yemeni society, particularly women. Domestic violence levels increased, as did the additional care responsibilities amidst the pandemic-induced lockdowns ([SaferWorld, 27 October 2020](#)). The expansion of the [male guardianship requirement](#) (Mahram) in the Houthi-controlled region in late 2022, including new specifications for the tailoring and selling of women's clothing, further reflects the intensifying social restrictions women face in Yemen (HRW Dispatches, 6 February 2023). These cultural restrictions make it virtually impossible for female converts to attend church meetings as they require both the permission and escort of a male relative.

### Technological landscape

Yemen has the lowest internet and Facebook penetration rate in the Middle East. According to [DataReportal Digital 2024: Yemen](#) / Survey date - January 2024:

- **Internet usage:** 17.7% penetration
- **Social media usage:** 10.3% of the total population. According to [Napoleon Cat](#) (May 2024) 82.9% of Facebook users were male and 17.1% women. The largest user group (35.5%) consisted of people aged 18 to 24.
- **Active cellular mobile connections:** 59.8% percent of the total population.

According to the [World Factbook Yemen](#) (accessed 29 July 2024), the telecom market faces immense challenges due to the ongoing civil war, with essential infrastructure like mobile towers and fiber cables frequently damaged or destroyed by opposing sides in the conflict. A large portion of the population requires humanitarian aid and lacks disposable income for telecom services, deterring investment from operators to upgrade outdated mobile networks or develop fixed-line infrastructure. Progress for

the telecom sector will remain stagnant until the civil unrest subsides and infrastructure can be improved across the country.

Not all factions in the civil war have the capability to monitor Internet traffic. The Houthis, however, have a sophisticated system of surveillance, actively seek out Christians and exert direct control over accessing the Internet. However, it is unclear how closely the Houthis monitor specific Internet activities and people have been continuing to risk accessing Christian websites online.

According to Freedom House's [Global Freedom Index 2024 Yemen](#):

- "The state has historically controlled most terrestrial television and radio, though there have been several privately owned radio stations. Since the outbreak of the war, the belligerents have either taken over or enforced self-censorship at any surviving media outlets in the country. Houthi-backed authorities reportedly block certain news websites, online messaging and social media platforms, and satellite broadcasts. In October 2023, a coalition of Yemeni and international human rights organizations condemned ongoing blocking efforts and politicized local internet shutdowns."
- "All sides in the conflict have subjected journalists to harassment, arbitrary arrests and detentions, violent attacks, and enforced disappearances. No journalists were killed in 2023, but two French journalists on Socotra were arrested in May 2023, held under house arrest, and forcibly deported in June after publishing articles on the UAE's de facto control of the island. Separately, as part of a larger prisoner exchange with the government in April, the Houthis released four journalists who had been arbitrarily arrested in 2015 and sentenced to death in 2020."

### **Gender perspective**

The gender gap in mobile Internet usage in the South Asia region averages at 41% ([GSMA, "The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022", p.15](#)). This gap suggests digital restrictions persist with respect to women's access to both information sources and community networks. Georgetown's research ([GIWPS Yemen profile](#), accessed 29 July 2024) indicates that Yemen is one of the worst performing countries for women overall, with about 53.5% cell phone usage among women. Because families monitor carefully the activities of female members, their telephones come under greater scrutiny, making it more difficult for women to become Christians, or become active in local churches. Also, mobile phones are often shared in the family, limiting privacy for both men and women.

### **Security situation**

The ongoing conflict in Yemen between the Houthi rebels and the internationally recognized government, supported by the Saudi-led coalition forces, is the result of internal power struggles compounded by a regional proxy war between Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates vying for influence. Yemen is currently the theater of at least four intertwined political crises, involving a constellation of political actors and armed groups seeking political power, recognition and influence (Source: [The Project on Middle East Political Science](#), January 2018). The Shiite-Sunni divide also plays a role in this conflict as the Saudi-led coalition and Hadi government are majority Sunni, whereas Iran and the Houthi rebels are mostly Shiite.

Assisted by the chaos of civil war, Islamic militant groups have become more influential. Particularly the influence of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has grown further as it expands its territorial control in southern Yemen. Groups affiliated with the Islamic State group (IS) are also present in the war-torn country and have been attacking both Shiite and government-related targets since March 2015. The insecurity caused by radical Islamic movements makes Yemen very unstable; all citizens, particularly Christians, are suffering from the lawlessness and are believed to be under surveillance by radical Muslims. They can also become a specific target for militant attack. Buildings where Christians (or expatriates from Christian countries) were operating have been targeted in the course of the fighting. For instance, in March 2016, a Catholic care-home for the elderly and disabled was directly targeted by assailants connected to IS. There are also reports that violent Islamic groups (both al-Qaeda and Houthis) have been infiltrating house-churches in order to track down and persecute converts.

Wherever the Saudi-led coalition forces have dominated or liberated areas, Christians were often targeted by violent Sunni groups.

### **Gender perspective**

There is a gendered component to this backdrop of extreme violence. During conflict men and young boys are more likely to be killed or injured. Men are also more likely to be targeted by radical Muslims and may be forced to spend lengthy periods in hiding to escape being killed or forcibly recruited. With fewer mobility restrictions than women, men are more at risk of encountering the millions of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) scattered across the country; 426 deaths were attributed to these devices between 2019 and 2022 ([HRW World Report 2023/country chapter Yemen](#)).

Women and girls, on the other hand, primarily experience violence behind closed doors within the context of their family. Women are also vulnerable within the context of displacement: An estimated 79% of the 4 million displaced people in Yemen are women and children ([UNHCR, 14 July 2022](#)).

### **Christian origins**

Centuries before the advent of Islam, the Arabian Peninsula had considerable numbers of Jews and synagogues, Christians (probably mostly Nestorians) and church buildings. There are at least two traditions about how Christian faith came to the Arabian Peninsula. According to one tradition, Bishop Theophilus Indus was sent as an envoy of the Byzantine Emperor to Yemen's Kingdom of Himyar in 356 AD, and he founded the first known church in Aden and two more to the north. There were also some successful missionary activities from Syria, so that by the sixth century, Yemen had bishops, priests, monks and martyrs, resembling any other Christian land. There was also a large cathedral in Sana'a.

Freedom for Christians was halted when King Dhu Nuwas converted to Judaism. He carried out a major massacre of the Christian population. The survivors requested help from the Byzantine Empire, which sent an army from Aksum (Ethiopia) across the Red Sea to Yemen in 525 AD. This army, helped by Arab Christians, conquered Yemen, killed Dhu Nuwas and conducted a massacre of Jews. A Christian client king was installed on the throne. In 570 AD, the Persian Empire conquered Aden. According to Islamic tradition, Badhan, the fifth and last Persian ruler of Yemen is reported to have converted to Islam in 628 AD and Yemen soon fell under the political dominance of Islam.

According to an article published by Stratfor in April 2016, [for the next centuries](#) the Arabian Peninsula became overwhelmingly Islamic and Christianity lost significance. For 13 centuries the historical role of Christianity in the region was forgotten and it was hard to imagine that any other religion could coexist with Islam in its birthplace. In 1839 Great Britain seized Aden, while the Ottomans occupied North Yemen in 1849. This led to a separation of North and South Yemen that would last over a century. (In 1990, North and South Yemen merged into one republic.) Under the British, churches could return to Aden and South Yemen, to serve British and other expatriates and carry out social work among the Yemenis. At the end of the 19th century, the first Western missionary, a Scot, arrived in Yemen. In the following years, a medical service was set up which also opened the way for communicating Christian faith. In North Yemen, access for the Church was virtually impossible until the 1960s, due to the inaccessible nature of the country.

In the years since then, Yemen has experienced political instability, conflicts and sectarian tension, which have affected religious minorities, including Christians. The rise of conservative interpretations of Islam have made it difficult for Christians to practice their faith openly. The ongoing civil war in Yemen has further exacerbated the challenges faced by Christians and other religious minorities. The civil war has led to widespread displacement, destruction of infrastructure and the growing influence of radical Islamic groups, making the situation even more precarious for Christians.

## Church spectrum today

For security reasons no information on networks can be published.

Before the current civil war in Yemen (which began in 2015), there were thousands of expatriates, often working for development agencies, who were allowed to worship in registered churches in Aden and Sana'a. Most of these Christians have been forced to leave the country due to the insecurity caused by civil war. All three official church buildings (all located in Aden) which served expatriate Christians or refugees (mainly Ethiopian), have been damaged as a result of the war (including targeted attacks) and are closed. The indigenous Church in Yemen is composed of converts from Islam; additionally, there are currently large numbers of Ethiopian and Eritrean Christian refugees residing in Yemen, together with migrants in transit. The numbers of refugees and migrants fluctuates considerably.

## Further useful reports

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/>.

These are also available on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom):

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Yemen>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>.

## External Links

- Recent history: Global Freedom Index 2023 Yemen - <https://freedomhouse.org/country/yemen/freedom-world/2023>
- Recent history: back-channel negotiations - <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/december-alerts-and-november-trends-2022#yemen>
- Recent history: attacks on Israeli, US and UK-linked shipping - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/07/1152416>
- Recent history: Middle East Monitor - <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240401-new-houthi-issued-100-riyal-coin-deepens-economic-divide-in-yemen/>
- Recent history: UN agencies and international humanitarian organizations - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/06/26/yemen-houthis-disappear-dozens-un-civil-society-staff>
- Political and legal landscape: EIU 2023 - <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2023/>
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- Religious landscape description: Middle East Concern's report on Yemen - <https://www.meconcern.org/countries/yemen/>
- Economic landscape: UNDP's Human Development Report Yemen - <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/YEM>
- Economic landscape: Yemen Macro Poverty Outlook - <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099002404052411141/pdf/IDU13eb9dd0413b4c14d001a47d10895121c3fd7.pdf>
- Economic landscape: World Bank Yemen overview - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/overview>
- Economic landscape: GIWPS Yemen country profile - <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/yemen/>
- Economic landscape: inheritance rights - <https://wbi.worldbank.org/content/dam/documents/wbi/2022/snapshots/Yemen-rep.pdf>
- Economic landscape: World Bank Gender Data 2023 - [https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/yemen-rep#:~:text=Labor%20force%20participation%20rate%2C%20by%20sex%20\(%25%20of%20population%20ages%2015%2B\)%20\(modeled%20ILO%20estimate\)](https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/yemen-rep#:~:text=Labor%20force%20participation%20rate%2C%20by%20sex%20(%25%20of%20population%20ages%2015%2B)%20(modeled%20ILO%20estimate))
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