



Intercede for the Muslim World!

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!" (1Ch 16:31).

Today's Prayer Requests: *From Students, Alumni, and Workers*

MALI: Please keep praying for God's intervention in a village in central Mali, where jihadists have demanded that the two churches be closed and the Christians leave or turn to Islam. A pastor in the area gives this update (January 19):

"The jihadists have carried out their threat: both the Protestant [Evangelical] and Catholic churches are now closed; the faithful have about a month to renounce their faith. Otherwise, they say, they will return to wage war against the faithful. The state authorities are not present in the area; the jihadists are moving about as they please. [This village], it should be remembered, is the largest Christian community in the east of [this area], and this is a great suppression of the faith that has been skillfully orchestrated and set in motion. If [this village] falls, God forbid, all the other villages will fall... So let's pray that the authorities might think of this village and protect the Christian faithful who are under oppression. Secularism [i.e., the idea that the State has no official religion and is separate from religious affairs] is seriously threatened in our country; they really mean what they say; they don't want us."

*World Watch List 2023: Africa**

The World Watch List, researched and presented each year by Christian NGO Open Doors, was presented January 18. This list ranks the 50 nations where Christians face the most persecution, where they are the least free to live out and share their faith. Of all the sources of persecution (e.g., organized crime, dictatorial paranoia, clan oppression, other religions), Islamic oppression is the most prevalent. It is, sadly, no surprise that many African countries are on the list, from #2 Somalia to #45 Cameroon. Here are some other disturbing facts drawn from this report:

- Nineteen African nations appear on the 2023 list: 5 in North Africa and 14 in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Of these 19 nations, 12 have a Muslim population of 55% or more. In Eritrea (#4) and Nigeria (#6), Muslims make up nearly half the population.
- In the other five countries, Muslims are a minority, accounting for between 4% (DR Congo) and 26.4% (Ethiopia) of the population. Yet even in these nations, Islamic oppression is the major driver of the persecution of Christians and the suppression of the gospel.
- Researchers found that in 2022, 5,621 Christians were murdered worldwide—5,014 of these in Nigeria (89%). Nigeria also heads the list of the number of kidnappings of Christians: 4,726 out of 5,259 (90%).
- Open Doors notes that "26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa face high levels of persecution; half of these have violence scores in the 'extremely high' range." Believers face not only the threat of death, but also displacement; loss of property, home, and livelihood; kidnapping; sexual abuse and forced marriage, etc.

Please join us as we pray throughout the year for these nations, for our brothers and sisters, and for the salvation of Muslims, who are precious in God's sight!

Prayer Resources

*For the 2023 World Watch List, ranking the 50 nations where believers suffer most, see <https://tinyurl.com/wwl23uk>

Global Initiative is a ministry of Assemblies of God World Missions, USA. Visit <https://reachingmuslimpeoples.com/> for information about praying for Muslims and weekly requests.

For a weekly lesson and prayer topic about an aspect of Islam, see <https://prayingformuslims.com/>.

For suggestions on starting a prayer group, see <https://www.waast.org/pray-with-us/pray-for-the-unreached/>.

For news updates concerning persecuted Christians, visit <http://morningstarnews.org/>, <http://worldwatchmonitor.org/>, and <http://www.releaseinternational.org/>.

For prayer requests, visit <https://www.icommittoprayer.com/>.

To help you answer Muslims' questions about God's Word, see <http://muslimsask.com/>, <http://www.unchangingword.com/>, <http://answeringslam.org/>, and <https://jesustomuslims.org/>.