

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Truth In An Uncertain World

Last Week's Topic

Baptism

Next Week's Topic

Economics

Today's Topic

**Christian Persecution
around the world**

Matthew 24

As He [Jesus] was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ [Messiah],’ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:3-14 (NAS)

Jesus told His followers what to expect

- Then they will deliver you to **tribulation**, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.
Matthew 24:9 (NAS)
- Then they will hand you over for **persecution**, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of My name.
Matthew 24:9 (HCSB)
- Greek noun θλίψις *thlipsis*



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PERSECUTION?

Open Doors defines persecution against Christians as “any hostile action toward a person or community motivated by their identification with the person of Jesus Christ.”

Hostility takes many forms. It can be visible and violent, where churches are burned, believers attacked, Christians kidnapped and killed. But it can also be a subtler, more attritional force. Millions of Christians live in a culture of hostility and intolerance as they try to exercise their faith against a background of discrimination and injustice.

This year, persecution has evolved beyond traditional methods. In some countries, artificial intelligence monitors digital behavior patterns to identify Christians. In others, sophisticated propaganda campaigns turn communities against believers. Economic restrictions deny Christians access to employment, education and basic services.

Persecution can also be regional. This is why many countries you might consider Christian, like those in sub-Saharan Africa, can appear on the list. Nigeria, for example has the biggest church auditoriums in the world. But that is in the south. In the northern (and increasingly, the central) regions, Christians are in a minority, and radical Islamic groups, like Boko Haram, and Fulani militants can create havoc.

This is why the real, lived, eyewitness experiences of believers remain the core of the World Watch List. Because what matters is not the official, grandiose governmental statements about freedom of belief. What matters is what really happens on the ground when people try to follow Jesus in their everyday lives — and how God enables impossible faith to flourish even in the darkest places.

THE ENEMIES OF CHRISTIANITY HAVE ONE AIM: TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO BE A CHRISTIAN

So, they pass laws and spread rumors; they close down churches, put pastors in prison and drive Christians out of their homes.

They do everything they can to spread fear and hatred — to scorch the earth so badly that the seeds of faith simply cannot grow.

There's only one problem with this approach: it never works.

Against the odds, in refugee camps and prison cells, in houses and apartments, faith finds a way. Tiny as a mustard seed, silent as yeast, Christianity can grow anywhere.

Silence the sermons, and Christians still talk about Jesus. Close the churches, and Christians still find places to meet. Ban the Bible? They memorize it. Put pastors in prison? They share the gospel between the bars.

Because with man things might be impossible, but with God it's a different story entirely.

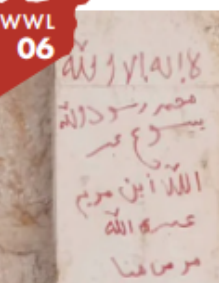
WHAT MAKES PERSECUTION POSSIBLE?

Sometimes we read stories of persecution in places like India and China and think, "How is this even possible? How do they get away with it?"

Persecution happens for a wide variety of reasons. But a look through the World Watch List reveals that there are some key factors that make it possible, even easy, for the enemies of Christianity to attack the church.

WAR AND ANARCHY

Perhaps the biggest enabler of persecution is chaos and anarchy. The breakdown of state authority creates lawless zones where criminal gangs and religious extremists can attack Christians secure in the knowledge that they will not face any consequences. This is the case in countries like **Yemen (3)**, **Sudan (4)**, **Libya (9)** and **Myanmar (14)**.



Graffiti reading "there will be no polytheists left in Syria by God's will. Our meeting is near, you pigs of the cross."

Many countries – especially those in sub-Saharan Africa – have a kind of split personality. They contain both regions where Christians are persecuted and regions where Christians live in relative tranquility. **Nigeria (7)**, for example, is home to Africa's largest Christian population. But it is also the country where Christians face the most violence. The reason is that, as in a lot of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Christians in the north of this vast country live in an entirely different situation to those in the south. In the south, there are mega-churches; in the north, thousands have been killed and millions forced to flee their homes and live in camps.

DICTATORSHIPS AND AUTHORITARIANISM

Christians are citizens of the kingdom of God. To many dictators and leaders, the idea of allegiance to a different kingdom, or to a different leader, is intolerable. These regimes equate religious independence with political dissent. In these places, persecution operates within a wider suffocation of rights, reinforced by media censorship, weak courts and oppressive surveillance. Nowhere exemplifies this more than **North Korea (1)**, where the leader is worshipped like a god and Christians are characterized in state propaganda as traitors and spies. Political authoritarianism has also intensified in

Cuba (24) and **Nicaragua (32)**. In September 2025, the government in **China (17)** published a list of 18 rules that, among other things, require religious leaders to support the Chinese Communist Party as well as forbid fundraising, outreach to youth or distribution of religious apps and publications.



CRIMINALITY AND GREED

Persecution sometimes comes down to some very basic things: greed, corruption and crime. Jesus warned his followers that they would be persecuted because they were like Him, so any demonstration of Christlikeness is likely to provoke opposition. In Central and South America, organized crime is one of the biggest drivers of persecution. In **Mexico (30)**, warring gangs and cartels often target church leaders and Christian organizations, especially those who attempt to broker peace or who provide assistance to victims. Persecution often has mixed motives. It can be allied with poverty, food scarcity or competition for land driven by climate change. Whatever the motivation, though, Christians make easy targets.

NATIONALISM AND HATRED

The world is becoming more partisan, more divided. At a national level more and more countries are deciding that religion is part of their national identity. To be an Indian is to be a Hindu. In the **Maldives (19)**, it is assumed that all citizens are Muslim. This operates at the local level as well. Converting from the traditional religion or from the "clan" or "family" faith is seen as a betrayal of their heritage. In **Somalia (2)**, converts from Islam are seen as traitors to clan and identity and can fall victim to localized, community-driven violence, including even public execution. In **India (12)**, the merging of the Indian nationality with the Hindu religion has led to a number of states imposing anti-conversion laws.

THE IMPOSSIBLE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

Perhaps the most potent and powerful reason for persecution is the faith of the church itself. The fact is that, in all these countries, the church is still present and alive. (In some places, it's even growing.) Despite the best efforts of dictators, extremists, secret policemen and party officials, churches continue to meet, scripture continues to be shared and the gospel is still proclaimed. Throughout these countries, churches continue to show remarkable resilience and creativity in how they witness for Jesus. The enemies of Christianity will still try to make life impossible for Christians. But it won't work. Because ours is an impossible faith. And nothing is impossible for God.

**What does God's Word say about
the persecution of believers?**

Jesus taught, “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”** Matthew 5:10-12

Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ **If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you**; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.” John 15:18-21

Apostle Paul wrote, “we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **persecuted** [Greek verb *διώκω* *dioko*], **but not forsaken**; struck down, but not destroyed”

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Apostle Paul wrote, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted [Greek verb *διώκω dioko*].”

2 Timothy 3:12

**What does God's Word instruct
believers to do in these
circumstances?**

Jesus taught, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute** [Greek verb διώκω *dioko*] **you**, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:43-48

Apostle Paul wrote, “Bless those who persecute [Greek verb διώκω *dioko*] you; bless and do not curse.”

Romans 12:14

Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you have tribulation** [Greek noun *θλῖψις* *thlipsis*... persecution], **but take courage**; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

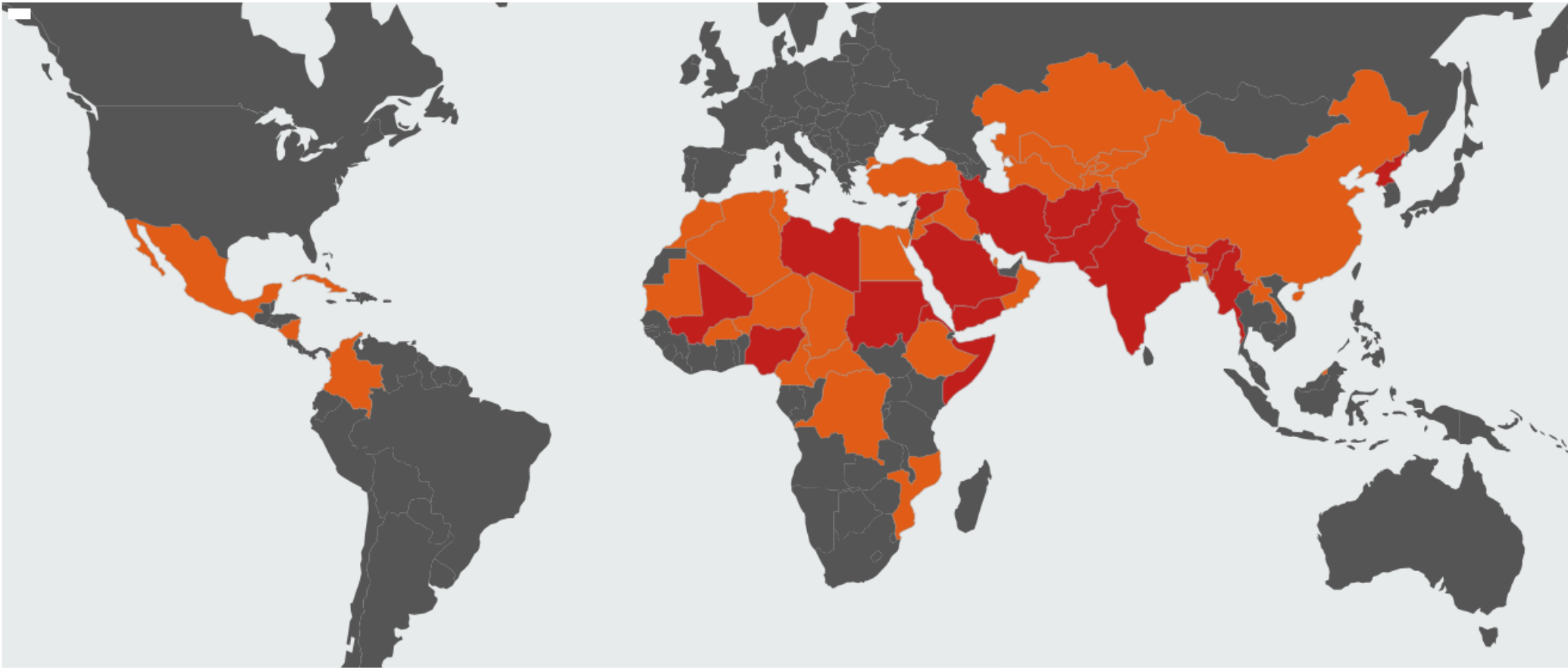
Apostle Peter wrote, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” 1 Peter 4:12-16

**What is happening around
the world today?**



<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/>

More than 388 million Christians face persecution and discrimination because they follow Jesus.



**WHAT'S THE
WORD?**

1	<u>North Korea</u>	11	<u>Afghanistan</u>	31	<u>Tunisia</u>
2	<u>Somalia</u>	12	<u>India</u>	32	<u>Nicaragua</u>
3	<u>Yemen</u>	13	<u>Saudi Arabia</u>	33	<u>Bangladesh</u>
4	<u>Sudan</u>	14	<u>Myanmar</u>	34	<u>Bhutan</u>
5	<u>Eritrea</u>	15	<u>Mali</u>	35	<u>Turkmenistan</u>
6	<u>Syria</u>	16	<u>Burkina Faso</u>	36	<u>Ethiopia</u>
7	<u>Nigeria</u>	17	<u>China</u>	37	<u>Cameroon</u>
8	<u>Pakistan</u>	18	<u>Iraq</u>	38	<u>Oman</u>
9	<u>Libya</u>	19	<u>Maldives</u>	39	<u>Mozambique</u>
10	<u>Iran</u>	20	<u>Algeria</u>	40	<u>Kyrgyzstan</u>
		21	<u>Mauritania</u>	41	<u>Türkiye</u>
		22	<u>Central African Republic</u>	42	<u>Egypt</u>
		23	<u>Morocco</u>	43	<u>Comoros</u>
		24	<u>Cuba</u>	44	<u>Qatar</u>
		25	<u>Uzbekistan</u>	45	<u>Kazakhstan</u>
		26	<u>Niger</u>	46	<u>Nepal</u>
		27	<u>Tajikistan</u>	47	<u>Colombia</u>
		28	<u>Laos</u>	48	<u>Chad</u>
		29	<u>DRC</u>	49	<u>Jordan</u>
		30	<u>Mexico</u>	50	<u>Brunei</u>

Open Doors research shows that the number of Christians worldwide killed for their faith increased by 8% to 4,849 in 2025.

Of these, 72% were from Nigeria – that’s more than the rest of the world combined.

Other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that recorded at least 100 faith-related killings include Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burkina Faso and Cameroon.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/persecution-trends/>

**WHAT'S THE
WORD?**

Algeria



WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IN ALGERIA LOOK LIKE?

Christian persecution in Algeria can be severe, as less than 1% of the country's population publicly identify as Christian. The indigenous Christians can face pressure from family and local society. Some female disciples have been divorced, which can leave them dependent on their [persecuted Christian](#) family because they are rejected by both their marital and birth families. In recent years, a handful have been prosecuted on charges related to their witness as followers of Christ.

Churches are affected by [Ordinance 06-03](#) published in 2006. This legislation concerns non-Muslim religious groups, requiring them to officially register and to conduct worship services exclusively in places registered with the state as dedicated for religious purposes. Religious entities violating the law can be fined and have their assets, including their buildings, confiscated.

The challenge is that the government has consistently failed to provide a mechanism by which churches can become registered officially. In 2019, the government initiated a campaign to close down the places of worship of unregistered churches. At present, 43 have been closed.

<https://globalchristianrelief.org/resources/countries/algeria>

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

Pope Leo Refuses to Denounce Islamist Persecution of Algerian Christians

Pontiff's Homage at Martyrs Memorial Sparks Controversy over Ethnic Cleansing of Catholic Pieds-Noirs

April 15, 2026 • Jules Gomes

<https://www.meforum.org/mef-observer/pope-leo-refuses-to-denounce-islamist-persecution-of-algerian-christians>

Since 2006, the Algerian government has closed fifty-eight Protestant churches, leaving only three churches open, including one international church, depriving Protestants of freedom of worship. The 2006 ordinance punishes any attempt to evangelize Muslims with five years in prison. Since Algeria supplies energy to Europe, partners with the U.S. on counterterrorism, and buys weapons from Russia, international players do not want to upset its government by raising the issue of religious freedom, leaving bodies like the Vatican to plead for persecuted Christians. Algerian whistleblower Chawki Benzehra explained that Leo's visit "could have been a historic event had he chosen to denounce the persecution of Christians by Islamists, as well as the violations of their freedom of worship by the Algerian regime." But, he said, "Unfortunately, he chose the path of not upsetting the Algerian authorities, even going so far as to forgo a visit to the monastery of Tibhirine, where [seven] monks were murdered [in 1996]. To this day, the Algerian regime still refuses to shed full light on this case."

Egypt



Source: BBC

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

Religion on Egyptian Citizens' ID Cards Enables Christian Persecution

JILL NELSON IN EGYPT

DECEMBER 16, 2025

The requirement makes it difficult for religious minorities to get jobs, justice, and opportunities. Advocates are pushing for change.

Although Egypt's Constitution protects religious freedom and criminalizes discrimination, the government seldom investigates acts of violence against Christians. Additional laws strictly limit freedom for religious minorities, creating a system of contradictions. Religious freedom advocates around the world are urging Cairo to do better. Groups want the Egyptian government to remove individuals' religions from their ID cards to prevent discrimination. Egypt's Christians number more than 10 million—at least 10 percent of the country's 111 million people—making it the largest Christian community in the Middle East and North Africa. Over 90 percent of the Christian population is Coptic Orthodox, but the government also targets Protestants. In October of 2025, a large Muslim mob attacked a Coptic Christian community in the Upper Egyptian town of Minya. Rumors of an 18-year-old Christian man dating a Muslim woman sparked the violence and led to the expulsion of the Christian family from the village. In 2021, Egyptian authorities jailed Abdulbaqi Saeed Abdo, originally from Yemen, for sharing his testimony on a Christian TV channel and participating in a social media group for Muslim-background believers. Authorities released him earlier this year after an international campaign. Now he and his family live in Canada. When police discover that a member of a Muslim family is attending church, they ask the family and neighbors to pressure the new convert, the ministry leader said. The convert is often forced into hiding. He added that church leaders can openly preach the gospel inside the church, but it's illegal to proselytize or hold Christian events outside church grounds. It's also illegal to change someone's designated religion on a national ID card from Muslim to any other faith. Converts to Islam face no challenges making a change.

Pakistan



Source: BBC

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

Muslim man holds Christian woman at gunpoint, orders her to marry him or be killed

By Christian Daily International/Morning Star News | Thursday, April 16, 2026



Pawel Gault/Stock

LAHORE, Pakistan — Police in Pakistan arrested a Muslim man accused of threatening to kill a Christian woman if she refused to convert to Islam and marry him, according to her family.

Imran Masih of Chak 6/11-L village near Harappa, Sahiwal District, said his 20-year-old niece, Laiba Javed, received a handwritten note from Rehman Irfan on April 2 demanding that she convert to Islam and marry him by April 15. In the note, Irfan warned that she would be killed if she refused, Masih said.

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-woman-in-pakistan-told-to-convert-marry-or-be-killed.html>

Police in Pakistan arrested a Muslim man accused of threatening to kill a Christian woman if she refused to convert to Islam and marry him, according to her family. Imran Masih of Chak 6/11-L village near Harappa, Sahiwal District, said his 20-year-old niece, Laiba Javed, received a handwritten note from Rehman Irfan on April 2 demanding that she convert to Islam and marry him by April 15. In the note, Irfan warned that she would be killed if she refused, Masih said. Masih said Javed, who works in Lahore, had returned to her ancestral village to celebrate Easter with relatives when she received the note. “Irfan, who is a former schoolmate of Laiba, came to our house with two armed accomplices when she was alone,” Masih told Christian Daily International–Morning Star News. “He handed her a letter at gunpoint stating that he loved her and would go to any extent to marry her after converting her.” Javed immediately informed her family, who contacted the police. Masih said officers initially advised restraint due to Easter celebrations. Tensions escalated on Easter Sunday when a cousin of the suspect allegedly disrupted a sunrise procession, prompting the family to again contact authorities. This time, police responded and raided the cousin’s residence. “The police went to arrest his cousin but also found Irfan there and took him into custody,” Masih said. “He has been booked for issuing threats, but we fear he could be released on bail and continue to harass us.” Masih said Javed has since left the village due to safety concerns, though they remain worried about her security. Her mother died a few years ago, and her father works as a farm laborer, he added. Ejaz Alam Augustine, a member of the Punjab Assembly and former provincial minister for human rights and minority affairs, said weak enforcement of laws continues to embolden perpetrators targeting girls from religious minority communities. He also criticized a Feb. 11 ruling by Pakistan’s Federal Constitutional Court that upheld the marriage of a 13-year-old Christian girl, Maria Shahbaz, to a 30-year-old Muslim who had allegedly abducted her. The court ruled that Islamic law permits Muslim men to marry women from Ahl-e-Kitab (People of the Book), a decision Augustine said has heightened fears among minority communities. “This judgment has created a sense of impunity,” Augustine said. “Many now believe it has put the security of Christian girls at greater risk.”

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Nigeria



Source: BBC

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

We Cannot Ignore the Plight of Nigerian Christians Being Slaughtered By Islamic Terrorists

by Paul Batura | April 16, 2026 | Culture



British actor and comedian John Cleese is known for making audiences laugh, but he's recently emerged as one of the few celebrities speaking out and taking the horrific slaughtering of Christians in Nigeria with the dire seriousness it deserves – but also applying an edge in order to call attention to the ongoing genocide.

<https://dailycitizen.focusonthefamily.com/nigerian-christians-slaughtered-islamic-terrorists/>

You would be forgiven for not knowing that 26 Christians were killed on Easter in the African country located on the Gulf of Guinea. This followed the Palm Sunday massacre of a dozen believers in the mostly Christian city of Jos, located in the country's north-central region. The media has been largely silent on the tragedy, despite the fact that more than 70 percent of the nearly 5,000 Christians killed for their faith around the world last year were living in Nigeria. Wrote Sean Feucht, the Christian music leader and global missionary, "Churches burned. Women and children abducted. The world stays silent." Christians in Nigeria are being targeted and murdered by radical Islamic terrorists – including Boko Haram and criminal militant gangs, who rape women and kidnap believers in the hope of receiving ransoms for their return. Many of the thugs carrying out the attacks are believed to have been inspired by ISIS. In response, the Trump administration has labeled Nigeria as a "Country of Particular Concern," a designation given to nations known for religious persecution. While President Biden referred to the complexity of the region, President Trump has been far blunter in his assessment. He recently acknowledged the threat, stating, "Christianity is facing an existential threat in Nigeria. Thousands of Christians are being killed. Radical Islamists are responsible for this mass slaughter."

**WHAT'S THE
WORD?**



Christians massacred on Palm Sunday as attacks escalate in Nigeria

By Anugrah Kumar, Christian Post Contributor | Wednesday, April 01, 2026



Funeral of Christians killed on Aug. 28, 2025, in Kauru County, Kaduna state, Nigeria. I Iliya Tata for Christian Daily International-Morning Star News

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/christians-massacred-on-palm-sunday-attacks-escalate-in-nigeria.html>

Gunmen killed at least a dozen people at a bar in the city of Jos in Nigeria on Palm Sunday and a retaliatory mob killed at least 10 others, as attacks on Christian communities across the country's Middle Belt and north intensified through the week. The shooting took place around 8 p.m. local time on Sunday in the Anguwan Rukuba neighborhood of Jos North district, Plateau State, when unidentified gunmen opened fire at a popular bar-cum-restaurant, Open Doors U.K. reported, citing the Plateau State Red Cross. Plateau State Red Cross Secretary Nurudeen Hussaini Magaji confirmed at least 12 people died at the scene. Local youth leader Mangalle Idris told AFP that a mob then formed and "attacked people that were either passing or doing business," killing an estimated 10 individuals. Jos North Deputy Council leader Kabiru Sani put the combined toll at 27. Open Doors reported that 14 died at the scene and 13 others died at a local hospital, for a total of 27, while Arise TV cited a figure of at least 40 killed in Anguwan Rukuba. The state government, which ordered a 48-hour curfew in Jos North through Wednesday, said investigations were ongoing without confirming a death toll or naming suspects. Plateau State Governor Caleb Manasseh Muftwang condemned the "barbaric and unprovoked attack," saying all necessary measures were being taken to apprehend those responsible. No group has claimed responsibility, while social media posts blamed Fulani Muslim herders or rural criminal gangs. Truth Nigeria attributed the attack to the Boko Haram terrorist group; the claim had not been verified by the Nigerian military as of Wednesday. The same night, gunmen raided a wedding in Kahir village in Kagarko County, southern Kaduna State, killing at least 13 people and abducting several guests around 11:47 p.m., according to Truth Nigeria. Kagarko is a predominantly Christian area of southern Kaduna.

Why are more Christians killed in Nigeria than anywhere else?

The intensifying persecution facing Christians globally is reflected in the increasing numbers of believers being killed for their faith. In 2025, according to Open Doors research, at least 4,849 Christians paid the ultimate cost for following Jesus. Of these, 3,490 believers killed for their faith come from Nigeria. What makes Christians in Nigeria so prone to violent attacks?

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/nigeria-christians-world/>

The heightened violence against Christians largely comes from four groups: Boko Haram, Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP), Fulani militants and armed 'bandits'. The attacks are mostly concentrated in the Muslim-majority north but are rapidly spilling over into the predominantly Christian south. Boko Haram and its splinter group ISWAP – both of which have pledged allegiance to so-called Islamic State – specifically target believers.

Meanwhile, climate change and environmental degradation are pushing Fulani herdsmen – whose origins are pastoral and Islamic – and their cattle southwards, creating tensions with other farmers, which include Christians. Amongst these Fulani are militants who have turned disputes into something far more sinister, with attacks being driven by ethnic and religious ties.

Killing Christian men is a key strategy of all three groups, because it destroys livelihoods (with men tending to be a family's main breadwinner) and depopulates Christian communities.

The violence perpetuated by armed bandits is more complex. On the one hand, the activities of these gangs – which includes kidnapping for ransom – tend to be purely criminal rather than religiously motivated. On the other hand, members of the group mostly come from Muslim backgrounds, meaning kidnapped Christians are vulnerable to harsher treatment. Furthermore, there are links between these gangs and militant groups such as Boko Haram.

There are other factors at play in seeking to understand the high levels of violence against Christians in Nigeria.

Twelve northern states are governed by Sharia (Islamic law) and there is a widespread culture of impunity where the fundamental rights of non-Muslims are not upheld and violations against Christians go largely unnoticed.

This isn't helped by the intolerant ideology and incitement to violence perpetuated by non-Christian religious leaders, especially those who are Muslim. Hostility towards believers is also aggravated by the influence of others such as ethnic leaders and ideological pressure groups.

The threat of death for following Jesus can also come far closer to home. Muslims who convert to Christianity do so at risk of severe persecution, even death. This is especially the case in northern Nigeria. Consequently, many such believers flee their homes and states for safety.

What is driving the violence against Christians in Nigeria?

We interviewed Dr. John Eibner, president of Christian Solidarity International, a historian and human rights activist who has spent decades documenting religious persecution throughout Africa.

Bryan Lawrence Gonsalves - April 13, 2026 - <https://www.omnesmag.com/en/news/nigeria-violence-christians-interview/>

Two major factors help explain why Nigerian Christians remain highly vulnerable to ongoing violence, despite their significant population, not only in Nigeria but across Africa as a whole. The first factor is historical. During its northward expansion, the British colonial administration defeated the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903. It then chose to govern Nigeria through Lord Lugard's policy of indirect rule. This approach unwittingly created a political structure that favored the Islamic north, often at the expense of the diverse ethnic and tribal groups in the Middle Belt. As a result, the foundation of the Nigerian state was flawed from the outset. The second factor is ideological. Christians have generally adhered to biblical teachings that emphasize respect for governing authorities, who are expected to protect the vulnerable and ensure justice. Christianity also maintains a distinction between church and state, unlike Islam, which can integrate religious and political authority. Consequently, many Nigerian Christians have historically avoided active political engagement, with the Church remaining largely apolitical for decades. This disengagement may have had negative consequences, particularly in a context where Islam often operates as a political force.



Bill Maher: “I’m not a Christian, but they are systematically killing Christians in Nigeria. They’ve killed over 100,000. They’ve burned 18,000 churches. They are literally attempting to wipe out the Christian population of an entire country. Where are the kids protesting this?”

We Can Help When We Pray

We Can Help When We Give



www.FirstMelissa.com/GIVE

**WHAT'S THE
WORD?**

1. The Rebuilding Power of Local Churches

Even in regions devastated by violence, Christians continue to rebuild their communities with remarkable tenacity. Congregations that have lost buildings, pastors, or entire neighborhoods still find ways to gather. This adaptability is not just about survival but amounts to its own form of resistance. These communities demonstrate that Christian witness persists even where structures fall and that the destruction of buildings does not equate to the destruction of faith.

2. A Growth in Grassroots Solidarity

Across many regions facing instability, Christians are not standing alone. Local coalitions and non-governmental organizations are forming to meet immediate needs, protect vulnerable families, and support displaced believers. In places where state systems fail, Christians are organizing legal aid, trauma care, food distribution, and rescue operations for abducted or vulnerable individuals. This quiet solidarity rarely appears in international reporting, yet it represents one of the strongest safeguards against the isolation that hidden atrocities often create. It can be a hidden Kingdom advance, like leaven that works its way through dough.

3. Faith That Endures Under Pressure

Perhaps the greatest reason for hope is the resilience of faith itself. In authoritarian contexts where surveillance is intense, believers continue to gather in small groups and house churches. In communities displaced multiple times, Christians carry their traditions, hymns, and Scriptures wherever they go. Even where leaders are imprisoned, their congregations remain active. This is not optimism built on political sentiment, but hope anchored in a faith that has outlasted empires, ideologies, and generations of repression.

THREE REASONS FOR HOPE

- <https://globalchristianrelief.org/>

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

Amid the noise of geopolitical shifts, a quieter form of Christian response emerged from within persecuted communities themselves. A Chinese house church pastor, preaching in a clandestinely circulated sermon, articulated what many beleaguered believers have long felt: **“The only way to deal with apocalyptic times is to follow the commands of Jesus. Don’t try to figure out the signs or the identity of Antichrist. Feed the hungry. Clothe the poor. Minister to the sick. Visit the dying. Embrace the dispossessed. Train not your eyes on the violence of this always apocalyptic world, but on its victims.”**

His words capture both the exhaustion and the moral clarity found among persecuted Christians. The same sentiment could easily be shared about Christian minorities in Central Asia or the conflict-ridden Sahel region. Many Nigerian Christian leaders, frustrated with the lack of response by their governments, have instead tried to organize their people and teach the incredibly difficult work of forgiveness. For those who have seen loved ones killed by senseless violence there might be no more difficult command from Jesus than “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

A Nicaraguan Christian leader expressed this value at the International Religious Freedom Summit, “I have agreed to come ... for two reasons — because I believe that there is a God who cares for us and because if we, as Christians, who believe in democracy, in freedom, in social justice, do nothing, no one else will.”

These Christians do not indulge in geopolitical fantasies or rescue narratives. They absorb, endure, rebuild, and serve. And for all the global attention paid to their suffering in 2025, it was this quiet faithfulness that remained the most enduring—and least understood—trend of all.

- <https://globalchristianrelief.org/>

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore **I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions [Greek noun διωγμός *diogmos*], with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

2 Corinthians 12:9-10



**Pastor
Bennett
Marona
in
South
Sudan**

**WHAT'S THE
WORD?**

After more than 30 years of perseverance, thousands of Baka speakers came together to dance, sing and experience the Word of God in their language at the Baka New Testament dedication.



<https://www.wycliffe.org/blog/posts/blessed-to-persevere-the-baka-of-south-sudan>

Why should we pray and give now?

“Blessed is that servant whose master returns and finds him doing his job.” Matthew 24:46