

31–40: March 31 – April 6

**High persecution**

- 31 Jordan
- 32 Nepal
- 33 Bhutan
- 34 Kazakhstan
- 35 Morocco
- 36 Brunei
- 37 Tunisia
- 38 Qatar
- 39 Mexico
- 40 Kenya

**41 – 50: April 7-13**

- 41 Russian Federation
- 42 Malaysia
- 43 Kuwait
- 44 Oman
- 45 United Arab Emirates
- 46 Sri Lanka
- 47 Colombia
- 48 Bangladesh
- 49 Palestinian Territories
- 50 Azerbaijan

# Praying for Persecuted Christians

Around  
The World

**World Watch List**



**OpenDoors USA.org**

**Prayer Calendar  
for Lent 2019**

First United Presbyterian  
Edinboro, PA

[EdinboroPresby.org](http://EdinboroPresby.org)  
[fb.com/EdinboroPresby](https://fb.com/EdinboroPresby)

Throughout the 40 days of Lent (and the 6 Sundays within this spiritual season), it's appropriate for us to seek to deepen our faith and dedicate ourselves to live in a way that our discipleship is more evident – and more life-changing for others.

One possible way to put this into perspective is to ponder how easy it is to live a casual life here where faith is simple. Even if we Americans live a bold and vibrant faith, it is much simpler for us to follow Christ than it is for thousands – *millions!* – of Jesus' followers who live in challenging and even dangerous contexts.

This prayer calendar provides lists of the 50 nations which the international "Open Doors" ministry has calculated are the least safe for Christians. Ten countries are listed for each week.

Pray for our persecuted Christian sisters and brothers – for their faith, their safety, and for wisdom and dedication shown in their daily lives. Also, pray that you individually and we together can live more boldly, demonstrating our trust in Jesus' Good News more like the examples of our fellow Christians elsewhere.

*Read more – or download a more-detailed "World Watch List 2019" booklet – from*

**Open Doors USA.org**

## 5 OVERARCHING TRENDS

### 1. The shocking reality of persecution against women.

In the 2019 World Watch List reporting period, there were shocking details about the persecution experienced by Christian women. In many places, they experience a "double persecution"—one for being a Christian and one for being a woman. Even in the most restricted circumstances, gender-specific persecution is a key means of destroying the minority Christian community. This kind of persecution is difficult to assess because it is complex, violent and hidden—in many cultures where women are specifically targeted, it is difficult if not impossible to report accurate numbers.

### 2. Islamic oppression continues to impact millions of Christians.

In seven out of the top 10 World Watch List countries, the primary cause of persecution is Islamic oppression. This means, for millions of Christians—particularly those who grew up Muslim or were born into Muslim families—openly following Jesus can have painful consequences. They can be treated as second-class citizens, discriminated against for jobs or even violently attacked.

### 3. The world's two most highly populated countries rise on the World Watch List.

For the first time since the start of the World Watch List, India has entered the top 10. Additionally, China jumped 16 spots, from 43 to 27. Each of these trends are distressing. Hindu nationalists in India continue to attack Christians with what seems like no consequences, and in China, the increased power of the government and the rule of Xi Jinping continue to make open worship difficult in some parts of the country.

#### 4. The spread of radical Islam across sub-Saharan Africa.

While the violent excesses of ISIS and other Islamic militants have mostly disappeared from headlines from the Middle East, their loss of territory there means that fighters have dispersed to a larger number of countries not only in the region but, increasingly, into sub-Saharan Africa. Their radical ideology has inspired, or infiltrated, numerous splinter groups such as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), a deadly group that broke away from Nigeria's Boko Haram that also enslaves Christian women and girls as an integral part of their strategy.

#### 5. More laws added to control religion.

State authoritarianism is increasing in many parts of the world, supported by the ever-spreading availability of personal digital technology, which governments can increasingly track through facial recognition, electronic chips and so on. Places like Vietnam, Myanmar, China and North Korea all saw increases in stricter state control of religious rights.

- \*1 – 10 : March 10-16
- 11 – 20 : March 17-23
- 21 – 30 : March 24-30
- 31 – 40 : Mar.31 - Apr.6
- 41 – 50 : April 7-13
- \*1 – 10 : Apr.14-21 Holy Week

### Extreme persecution

## The 50 countries where it is most dangerous to follow Jesus:

Pray for the Christians in these 10 countries each day **March 10-16** and again **April 14-21**, and then beyond that too.

WORLD WATCH LIST

- 1 North Korea
- 2 Afghanistan
- 3 Somalia
- 4 Libya
- 5 Pakistan
- 6 Sudan
- 7 Eritrea
- 8 Yemen
- 9 Iran
- 10 India

11 – 20: March 17-23

**Very high persecution**

- 11 Syria
- 12 Nigeria
- 13 Iraq
- 14 Maldives
- 15 Saudi Arabia
- 16 Egypt
- 17 Uzbekistan
- 18 Myanmar
- 19 Laos
- 20 Vietnam

21 – 30: March 24-30

- 21 Central African Republic
- 22 Algeria
- 23 Turkmenistan
- 24 Mali
- 25 Mauritania
- 26 Turkey
- 27 China
- 28 Ethiopia
- 29 Tajikistan
- 30 Indonesia

**PERSECUTION BY THE NUMBERS**

During the World Watch List 2019 reporting period, in the top 50 countries:

**4,136**

Christians were killed for faith-related reasons. On average, that's 11 Christians killed every day for their faith.



**2,625**

Christians were detained without trial, arrested, sentenced and imprisoned.

**1,266**

churches or Christian buildings were attacked.

