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World Watch Research

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# Comoros: 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).

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

Comoros: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
868,000	5,500	0.6

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

Comoros: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	5,500	0.6
Muslim	850,000	97.9
Hindu	0	0.0
Buddhist	0	0.0
Ethnic religionist	9,800	1.1
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	770	0.1
Atheist	100	0.0
Agnostic	1,200	0.1
Other	0	0.0
<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

Comoros: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Islamic oppression	Non-Christian religious leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, One's own (extended) family
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

In recent years, Comoros has gained attention for significant violations of religious freedom, leading to its inclusion again on the US Government's Special Watch List in December 2023. As a Muslim-majority country with Islam as the state religion, proselytizing for any religion except Sunni Islam is illegal, and the law allows for the deportation of foreigners who do so. Non-Sunni religious rituals cannot be carried out in public in order to maintain societal cohesion and national unity. The rights of Christians to worship, evangelize or gather for fellowship are severely limited by both the legal framework and the dominant Islamic demography. Expatriate Christians - the majority of whom are Roman Catholics - are restricted to worshipping at three designated churches in Moroni, Mutsamudu and Moheli, with all other non-Sunni religious practices banned. There are significant risks for the Christian minority, especially for those who are converts from Islam and those possessing Christian materials.

## Summary of international obligations and rights violations

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

1. [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CAT\)](#)
2. [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)
3. [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)

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

- Christian parents cannot raise their children according to their religious values (CRC Art. 14);
- Christian female converts run the risk of being forcibly married to Muslim men or forcibly divorced (CEDAW Art. 16)

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

- Local communities increasingly ostracize individuals suspected of converting from Islam to Christianity.
- Girls and women who convert to Christianity may face severe consequences, including house arrest.



- Only expatriate Christians are permitted to meet for worship, and then only at the three registered churches in Moroni, Mutsamudu and Moheli.
- Public preaching by Christians is strictly prohibited, and the Penal Code imposes severe penalties: "Whoever discloses, spreads, and teaches Muslims a religion other than Islam will be punished with imprisonment of three months to one year and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Comorian francs" (\$108-1,100)."
- Legal and societal pressure has intensified, further restricting religious freedom for non-Sunni groups.

## Specific examples of positive developments

The country continued to show improvement in terms of political stability.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** The Christians in this group (for instance, the church of the Malagasy people from Madagascar) suffer many restrictions: They are not allowed to integrate converts from Islam, they are not allowed to preach in public outside their churches and if they do so, they will be deported. These communities face persecution primarily from radical Muslims and non-Christian religious leaders, and to a lesser extent from the leaders of political parties and their followers. Since the current government is improving the stability of the country and its relationship with Western countries, many observers think the situation for expatriates might soon improve significantly.

**Historical Christian communities:** These do not exist separate from the expatriate category above.

**Converts to Christianity:** Christians with a Muslim background face persecution at home from family and community members, as well as from government officials, non-Christian religious leaders, leaders of political parties and their followers and from radical Islamic groups such as the *djaulas*. If their conversion becomes known, converts will be shunned and completely cut off from their families and friends.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** Christians in this category are known for evangelizing, which cannot be done in public in Comoros. The Penal Code declares that "whoever discloses, spreads, and teaches Muslims a religion other than Islam will be punished with imprisonment of three months to one year and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Comorian francs". Christians from Baptist, Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations thus face persecution from the government and radical Muslims.

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

All three categories of Christian communities in Comoros face persecution. The level of persecution that Christians from a Muslim background experience is far severer than the levels other groups face, no matter where they live geographically.

## Position on the World Watch List

Comoros: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	67	42
WWL 2024	66	45
WWL 2023	66	42
WWL 2022	63	53
WWL 2021	62	50

In WWL 2025, Comoros scored 67 points, an increase of one point compared to WWL 2024. The country’s score has progressively risen over the last five years, up from 62 points in WWL 2021. Although average pressure has remained at 12.9 points since WWL 2023, the score for violence went up from 1.1 points in WWL 2024 to 2.6 points. Only expatriate Christians are permitted to meet for worship, and public preaching of a religion other than Sunni Islam is strictly prohibited. Local communities increasingly ostracize individuals suspected of converting from Islam to Christianity. It is noteworthy that Comoros was among the WWL Top Ten countries in the early 1990s until 1998 and remained in the Top 20 for several years afterwards, highlighting a long-standing pattern of challenges for religious minorities in the country.

## Persecution engines

Comoros: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Strong
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Weak
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Not at all
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
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.*

### Islamic oppression (Strong)

*Islamic oppression* in Comoros is not new; however, its recent growth started with the adoption of a legal framework for introducing a state-sanctioned religion. In 2009, a referendum was held enabling the government of Comoros to change the Constitution, which now declares that Islam is the state religion. This constitutional change severely curtails the existence of other religions. Parallel to the new Constitution, it has become visible that residents are adopting a radical view of Islam, especially on the islands of Anjouan and Moheli. The rise of radical Islamic sympathies among the population at large, government officials, religious leaders and Muslim youth groups in particular, causes anxiety among Christians.

### Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

This engine is re-emerging as an independent force in the country having been previously present but blended with *Islamic oppression*. This engine is becoming increasingly visible in the way the government has chosen to consolidate its power by promoting Sunni-Islam at the expense of all other religions. The government has put serious restrictions on the activities of Christians and Christian NGOs.

### Drivers of persecution

Comoros: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	STRONG			WEAK			MEDIUM		
Government officials							Medium		
Ethnic group leaders				Very weak					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Strong								
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Strong								
One's own (extended) family	Strong								
Political parties							Very weak		

*The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.*

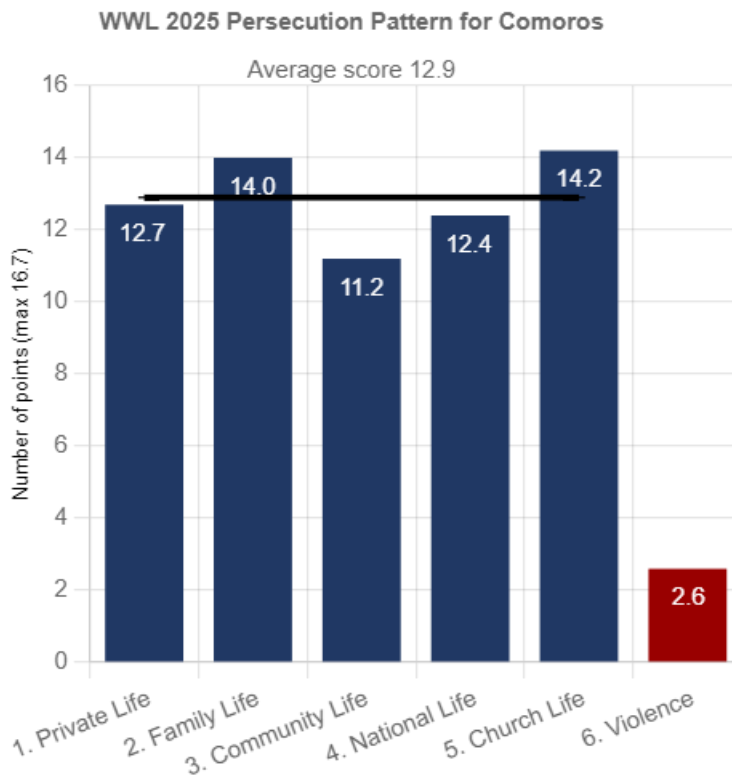
### Drivers of Islamic oppression

- **Non-Christian leaders (Strong):** Muslim religious leaders are at the forefront of *Islamic oppression*. In mosques and madrassas, they regularly teach anti-Christian sentiments. An ultra-conservative group of radical scholars locally known as *djaulas* (many of whom are trained in Pakistan) is pushing the country to a more extreme view of Sharia law in the country and are hostile towards Christians.
- **Citizens (Strong):** Similar to other Muslim majority countries, for the majority of Comorians, to leave Islam is unthinkable. The *djaulas* encourage them to harass, bully and ostracize any Christians they come across. This is particularly severe in the case of converts.
- **Extended family (Strong):** Family and community members discriminate and harass suspected converts from Islam to Christianity. They also deny worshipping space for Christians in general.

### Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** The government of Comoros has shown its intent by stating publicly that freedom of religion 'does not work' for converts and Christians. As stated above: The authorities also prohibit Christians from engaging in religious discussions in public and from preaching in public outside churches.

## The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2025 Persecution Pattern for Comoros shows:

- The average pressure on Christians is at a very high level of 12.9 points, similar to the level recorded in WWL 2024.
- Pressure is highest in the *Church* and *Family spheres of life*, at the extremely high levels of 14.2

points and 14.0 points, respectively. These scores indicate significant challenges for Christians in practicing their faith as a church and within their family environments.

- The score for violence is low at 2.6 points, an increase from 1.1 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 1.1: Conversion has been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another. (3.50 points)***

Conversion to Christianity in Comoros often results in rejection, ostracism, expulsion, and the loss of many social benefits within the community. For converts from Islam, the challenges are particularly profound. Societal resistance to religious conversion and public worship creates an environment where openly expressing their beliefs is nearly impossible. The absence of societal recognition and acceptance further isolates converts, leaving them vulnerable and marginalized within their own communities.

***Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (3.50 points)***

Even personal acts of worship, like prayer or Bible reading, can pose significant challenges for Christian converts in Comoros, particularly those residing with their Islamic parents, relatives, or within close-knit communities. The social and familial environment often remains deeply opposed to any deviation from Islamic practices and can lead to a high risk of confrontation, rejection and even violence, leaving converts with little privacy or freedom to practice their faith.

***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)***

In Comoros, personal expressions of faith, whether physical or digital, are extremely challenging for Christians, particularly when youth or community leaders are observing. Written expressions, such as maintaining a journal, participating in online discussions, or sharing Christian teachings on social media, are risky and can lead to societal backlash or legal repercussions. Quoting the Bible or prayers, or discussing Christian matters privately can be misinterpreted as attempts to proselytize or influence others.

***Block 1.5: It has been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols. (3.50 points)***

Christians in Comoros face considerable risks when displaying Christian symbols, such as crosses or religious artwork. Restrictions on religious practices often extend to personal spaces, making it difficult for individuals to keep or display religious symbols even within their own homes. Such displays can attract scrutiny, particularly in communities where resistance to public expressions of Christianity is

strong. For converts from Islam, these challenges are particularly acute. The absence of acceptance and tolerance for their new faith intensifies the risk of backlash, as visual representations of belief can be interpreted as a provocative act. These limitations force Christians to navigate their faith with caution, avoiding visible expressions that could lead to societal rejection or punitive consequences.

## **Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere**

### ***Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (3.75 points)***

Parents in Comoros face significant challenges in raising their children according to Christian beliefs, a core aspect of the broader struggles Christians experience in the country, especially within family life. Converts from Islam encounter immense pressure regarding their children's education, as societal norms and legal expectations compel them to enroll their children in Quranic schools (madrasahs). Failure to comply with this expectation often results in suspicion from the community, leading to intense societal pressure and ostracism. An Education Law adopted in 2022 further complicated the situation by stipulating that pre-elementary education (for ages three to five years) must aim at instilling the basic elements of Islam. This legal requirement restricts Christian families' ability to provide an alternative educational environment consistent with their beliefs, further marginalizing them within the education system.

### ***Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (3.50 points)***

Celebrating Christian weddings in Comoros is fraught with challenges, particularly for converts from Islam, and especially in tight-knit communities where deviation from Islamic norms is met with hostility. The lack of official recognition for Christian converts, including the inability to obtain certificates of conversion, makes it nearly impossible to formally acknowledge their Christian faith during wedding ceremonies. Without this recognition, the state's presumption that all Comorians are Muslims undermines the legitimacy of Christian practices, forcing many to hold wedding celebrations in secrecy. Publicly celebrating a Christian wedding carries significant risks. The presence of religious elements in the ceremony, such as prayers, hymns and Christian vows, could attract societal and governmental scrutiny and be easily interpreted as public preaching, an act punishable by law in Comoros. This perception of proselytizing leads to the fear of legal repercussions and community backlash. Couples must exercise extreme caution to avoid attracting such attention, often limiting their celebrations to private spaces and small gatherings.

### ***Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (3.50 points)***

The act of baptism, as a visible declaration of Christian faith, is met with hostility in a society where deviation from Islam is seen as a threat to communal identity. Converts and their families face immense societal pressure, as communities may perceive baptisms as attempts to proselytize or undermine Islamic norms, which is punishable by imprisonment and fines under Comorian law. This forces many Christians to hold baptisms in secrecy, often in isolated locations, to avoid drawing attention.

***Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (3.50 points)***

All children in Comoros are compelled to attend educational institutions that prioritize Islamic teachings, making it challenging for Christian families to nurture their children in alignment with their faith. The Education Law adopted in 2022 mandates that pre-elementary education for children aged three to five focuses on acquiring the foundational elements of the Muslim religion, including two years of initiation into Islamic and cultural values. This legal framework effectively enforces exposure to non-Christian teachings from an early age, leaving parents with no alternative for a faith-aligned education. Converts, in particular, face immense societal pressure to comply with these requirements, as refusal to send their children to Quranic schools can lead to suspicion, ostracism, and severe community backlash. This environment severely restricts Christian parents' ability to provide a consistent Christian upbringing for their children, further marginalizing their religious identity and limiting the transmission of their faith within their families.

**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.). (3.75 points)***

Christians in Comoros face significant challenges within their communities. Converts often encounter harassment, threats and obstruction, which can lead to expulsion and severe social ostracization, significantly impacting their ability to access communal resources essential for daily life. The marginalization extends to civic participation, where Christians are often excluded from public forums and denied the right to vote, depriving them of a voice in community decisions.

***Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.75 points)***

Christians in Comoros face pervasive monitoring by local communities and private groups due to their religious beliefs. Converts often experience intense scrutiny, including police reporting, shadowing, and surveillance of communication channels like phones and emails. This invasive monitoring infringes on their privacy and fosters a constant state of insecurity and fear, as they know their activities are under watch. Expatriate Christians frequently face the threat of expulsion due to this strict monitoring of their activities by government agents. Authorities closely observe foreigners, particularly to identify those who may be engaging in public preaching or religious activities perceived as proselytizing, which are considered violations of the law and can result in immediate deportation.

***Block 3.10: Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons. (3.75 points)***

Christians in Comoros experience systemic and deeply rooted persecution that permeates both government institutions and societal structures. This persecution manifests in various forms, including restrictions on religious practices, denial of opportunities in education and employment, and intense societal pressure to conform to the state religion.

***Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (3.50 points)***

Converts often face expulsion and social ostracization when their beliefs become known, leading to their exclusion from vital communal resources. This deprivation highlights the severe challenges faced by Christians, as it impacts their ability to meet basic needs and intensifies their isolation within their communities. The denial of access to essential resources not only exacerbates their hardships but also undermines their fundamental human rights, pushing them to the margins of society and deepening their vulnerability.

**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)***

The Constitution and national laws impose significant restrictions on religious freedom, conflicting with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The recognition of Islam as the state religion institutionalizes favoritism towards Islam, creating systemic disadvantages for religious minorities, particularly Christians. This institutional bias manifests through limited public representation, restricted access to employment opportunities, and the exclusion of Christians from societal recognition. Such policies infringe upon the individual rights of Christians and undermine the principles of religious pluralism and tolerance necessary for a cohesive and diverse society. The legal framework in Comoros thereby fails to uphold the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, entrenching religious discrimination and marginalization of non-Muslim communities.

***Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (4.00 points)***

Christians in Comoros face severe barriers when expressing their faith-based opinions publicly due to the institutionalized discrimination favoring the Islamic majority. The state's preference for Islam limits the freedom of expression for religious minorities, including Christians. This bias becomes apparent in various ways, including suppression of Christian perspectives in public discourse and restrictions on open dialogue. The prohibition on Christians discussing their faith-based views in public, coupled with the legal ban on such actions and the penalties of fines and imprisonment for violators, illustrates the severe restrictions on freedom of expression in Comoros. These measures reflect the broader constraints imposed on religious minorities, which limit their ability to engage openly within society.

***Block 4.2: Officials have refused to recognize an individual's conversion as recorded in government administration systems, identify cards (etc.). (3.50 points)***

In Comoros, deep-rooted legal, cultural, and institutional systems actively work against Christianity and conversion, creating significant challenges for religious minorities. As Islam is recognized as the state religion, government policies and societal norms heavily favor the Islamic majority while systematically marginalizing Christians. One of the most critical manifestations of this bias is the refusal to officially recognize conversions to Christianity in vital records such as identity cards.



***Block 4.9: Christian civil society organizations or political parties have been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions. (3.50 points)***

Christian civil society organizations and political parties in Comoros face significant challenges rooted in systemic bias favoring Islam as the state religion. These groups encounter restrictions or outright bans, severely limiting their ability to operate, engage in public discourse, or participate fully in the democratic process. Even when allowed to function, they do so in a highly restrictive environment where openly engaging in Christian teaching is prohibited, and the boundaries between public and private activities are often blurred.

**Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere**

***Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (4.00 points)***

Government policies prioritize Sunni Islam and prohibit the establishment of non-Sunni places of worship in public spaces, effectively barring the construction or renovation of new Christian churches. Even the maintenance of the existing, expatriate churches is restricted, with permission rarely granted and often accompanied by extensive bureaucratic delays.

***Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.75 points)***

In Comoros, Christian churches and their activities are subject to strict monitoring, hindrance, and obstruction, reflecting systemic discrimination against religious minorities in this predominantly Islamic nation. Government authorities enforce policies that restrict non-Sunni religious practices. Expatriate Christian communities, though allowed limited worship spaces, face strict surveillance, often under the guise of maintaining national unity. This climate of control and intimidation forces many Christians into self-censorship, stifling both their religious expression and their right to worship freely.

***Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (3.75 points)***

Securing registration or legal status for churches in Comoros is a deeply challenging process, burdened by extensive legal and social barriers. The government has designated only three places of worship for Christians, all primarily serving expatriates, further marginalizing the local Christian population. Comorian authorities, viewing all Comorians as Muslims by default, often argue that there is no justification for granting licenses or registrations for churches catering to converts. This systemic bias not only obstructs efforts to secure legal recognition for churches but also results in severe personal consequences for those involved, including ostracism from their families and communities for participating in Christian worship.

**Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.75 points)**

Churches in Comoros operate within extremely limited spaces, with only three designated places of worship allowed for expatriate Christian communities. Organizing Christian activities outside the designated church compounds is not allowed as public preaching or proselytizing is punishable by imprisonment and fines under Comorian law. Such strict measures discourage public expressions of faith and can expose individuals to severe societal backlash.

## 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 WWL chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

Comoros: 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?	2	0
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
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?	0	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?	10 *	0
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	2	0
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	6	14
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?	1	0
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?	0	0
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	0	10 *
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

In the WWL 2025 reporting period:

- **Churches attacked:** Two churches were attacked and damaged by a youth mob in the community who view Christianity as contrary to their faith and culture. This has created fear among churchgoers.
- **Christians raped or sexually harassed:** At least ten Christians reported experiencing rape or other forms of sexual harassment due to their faith, compared to none in WWL 2024.

- **Forced marriages:** There were two documented cases of Christians forced into marriages with non-Christians, compared to none in the previous year.

## 5 Year trends

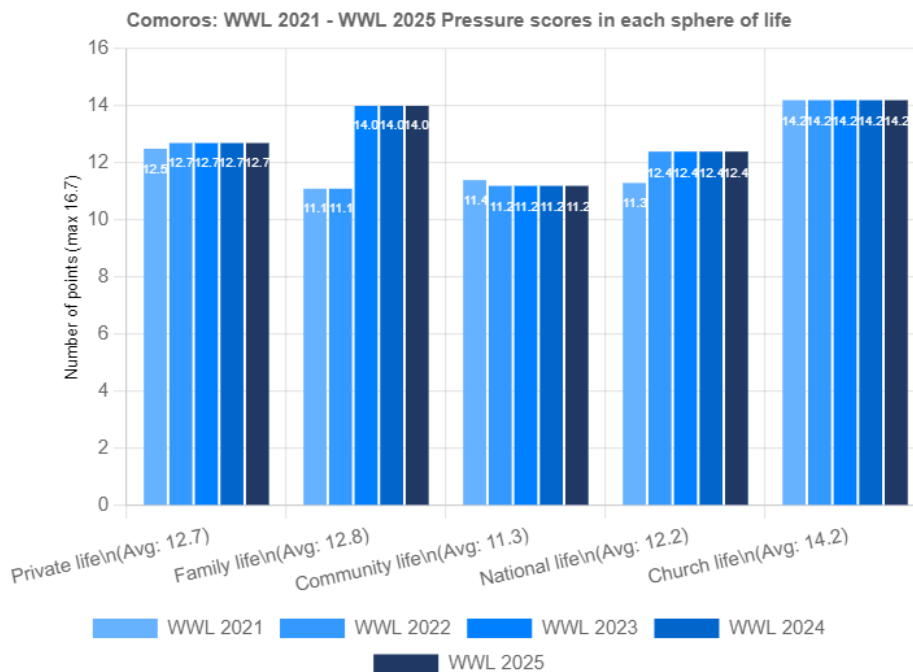
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

### 5 Year trends: Average pressure

Comoros: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	12.9
2024	12.9
2023	12.9
2022	12.3
2021	12.1

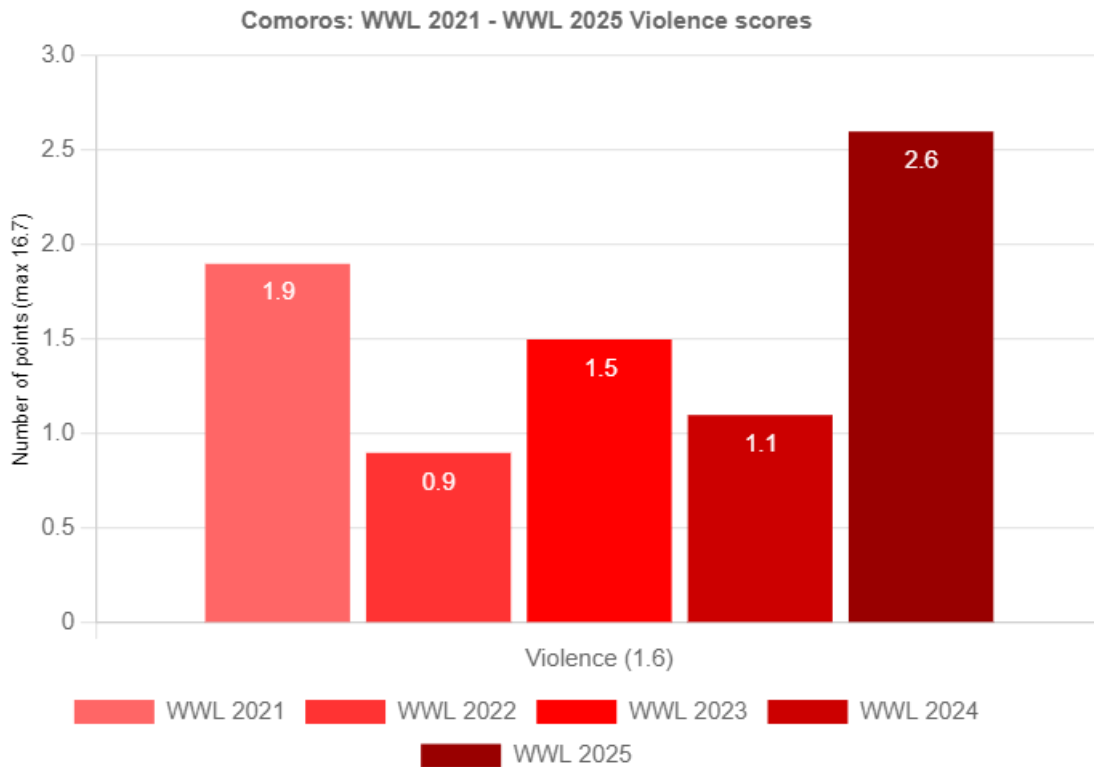
The table above shows that the average pressure on Christians has currently leveled off at 12.9 points. This leveling off reflects the sustained pressure Christians face in Comoros caused by the government’s hostility toward non-Sunni religious groups and its encouragement for society to shun them. This persistently high level serves as a warning signal: if the violence score were to increase in the future, the country would likely see a much higher total score and WWL ranking.

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



The levels of pressure are highest on average in the *Church* and *Family spheres*. Scores have plateaued across all spheres of life in the last few reporting periods, with some spheres beginning to level off as early as WWL 2021 (*Church sphere*) or WWL 2022 (*Private, Community, and National spheres*). All spheres, except the *Community sphere*, scored on average over 12.0 points, with the *Church sphere* recording the highest five-year average at 14.2 points.

**5 Year trends: Violence against Christians**



The five-year average violence score for Comoros stands at 1.6 points, with scores oscillating between 0.9 and 2.6 over this period. Comoros has consistently recorded low or very low levels of violence targeting Christians, which has kept the impact on its overall score and ranking relatively low. If violence levels in Comoros were higher, similar to those in many of the other top 50 countries, its overall score and ranking would very probably rise significantly.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

### Comoros Female Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024

Denied access to social community/networks  
 Denied inheritance or possessions  
 Forced divorce  
 Forced marriage  
 Incarceration by family (house arrest)  
 Violence – psychological  
 Violence – Verbal

Christian women and girls in Comoros face grave threats, including the risk of abduction and forced marriage, particularly within their own communities. Converts to Christianity, upon revealing their faith, often encounter social ostracization and other forms of hostility. Abduction and forced marriage represent some of the most extreme forms.

Many Comorian families traditionally have matrilineal inheritance, giving women a good deal of influence in the home that can often serve as a buffer against persecution. Nevertheless, female converts from Islam experience serious difficulties due to their conversion and are kept under close family scrutiny. Women and girls who convert to Christianity before they have received their inheritance face the danger of being disinherited for their faith, due to the shame that their conversion has brought upon the family. This leaves them at a financial disadvantage, leading to poverty and distress. In addition to being shunned, there is the possibility that they will be forced into marrying a Muslim in order to pressure them to return to Islam. Women who refuse to marry face ostracism from their community. Christian women and girls are more vulnerable to discrimination, harassment, and abuse, especially at the community level.

Apostasy remains a criminal offence in Comoros although not generally enforced. According to a country expert, sometimes, “the communal aspects of punishment such as isolation, denunciation and verbal or physical abuse at times could even be far worse.” A married woman who converts can be divorced for her faith, influenced by pressure from the family and community, highlighting the complex dynamics of persecution faced women and girls. In some instances, for example, husbands have been largely accepting of their new-found faith, although they have then come under huge pressure from their family and local community to initiate a divorce. Should a divorce occur however, she will remain responsible for the upbringing of her children and be able to share her Christian faith with them.

Christian women and girls are also particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Comoros is renowned as a [transit hub](#) for traffickers who traffic mostly women and children to the Middle East for sex work and forced labor (US State Department, Trafficking in Persons Report: Comoros, 2023).

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Comoros	Male Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
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Comoros	Male Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
	Denied access to social community/networks Denied food or water Economic harassment via business/job/work access Forced divorce Forced out of home – expulsion Imprisonment by government Violence – psychological Violence – Verbal

Comoros is a matrilineal society in which the cultural norm is for a married man to move in with his in-laws. Male converts in Comoros are often dependent upon their extended families and lack independence. In this situation, the family has the means to exert a great deal of pressure upon a convert to return to Islam. They are denied equal treatment in the home, verbally abused, and in some cases, occasionally denied food. Often their wife is put under pressure to divorce them and expel them from their home. In rare instances, male converts have faced such extreme pressures and threats that they have fled to another town for safety.

Converts often grapple with profound dilemmas related to their faith, including the education of their children in Quranic schools, which can create religious tensions within marriages, leading to marital conflicts and ultimately divorce as spouses may struggle to reconcile their differing religious identities and practices. Furthermore, the absence of official recognition for Christian converts, combined with the state's assertion that all Comorians are Muslims, further complicates these situations.

Christian men also experience discrimination in the workplace. Employers favor Muslims and as such many Christians are out of work. In addition, because of high corruption levels in public service, most employees pay a bribe to get into positions, a practice that Christians are not willing to condone. The persecution of men and boys affects Christian families and communities greatly. Where Christian men are not able to find work because of being discriminated against, they are not able to provide for their families and become increasingly dependent on women who hold the family wealth.

The government also closely monitors Christian activities and maintains all legal prohibitions against any other religion other than Sunni Islam. This makes Christian preaching, training of church leaders, and publication of Christian materials extremely difficult. Since the majority of church leaders in Comoros are men, these violations predominantly affect male Christians. According to a country expert, pastors and priests are particularly vulnerable to arrests if what they preach is interpreted as being “against social cohesion.”

## Persecution of other religious minorities

In 2022 and 2023, Shia and Ahmadi Muslims reported that they were unable to worship publicly, and government authorities occasionally attended their religious gatherings in private homes to observe their practices without interference. The conservative nature of society and the government's stance on religion have contributed to these restrictions.

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

- The Constitution mandates that the principles and regulations governing worship and social life adhere to Sunni Islam, particularly following the Shafi'i doctrine. Proselytizing for any religion other than Sunni Islam is prohibited, with the law providing for the deportation of foreigners who engage in such activities. Public performance of non-Sunni religious rituals is also forbidden, as it is seen as a threat to societal cohesion and national unity.
- The report adds that members of Shia and other non-Sunni groups reported engaging in significant self-censorship, only practicing or discussing their beliefs in private settings. Both Shia and Ahmadi Muslims noted that they are unable to worship publicly, and while government authorities sometimes monitor private religious gatherings, they typically do not interfere with the practices taking place in these settings.

## Trends Summary

### 1) Consolidation of power

In Comoros, the political landscape reflects a tumultuous history marked by coups and political unrest. While recent presidential and legislative elections have been relatively fair, controversy persists. A contentious 2018 referendum introduced major systemic changes and faced strong opposition, resulting in severe persecution. Following his re-election in 2019, and again in January 2024, President Azali Assoumani has concentrated power by suppressing opposition and restricting press freedom. This power consolidation occurs against a backdrop of systemic corruption and widespread poverty.

### 2) Dependence on foreign aid

Comoros' economic condition is characterized by poverty and a heavy reliance on foreign aid, particularly from Middle Eastern nations. However, this aid often comes with strings attached, as Middle Eastern countries exert pressure on Comoros to adopt policies aligned with their ideologies. This creates a scenario where aid is used as leverage to influence the nation's policies, resembling a form of political and ideological blackmail.

### 3) Conservative society and restrictions on Christians

Comoros' conservative societal and cultural norms translate into strict governmental stances on religion. The government imposes significant restrictions on Christians and Christian NGOs. Due to severe violations of religious freedom, Comoros has been on the US Special Watch List since November 2022. These actions highlight the government's alignment with conservative values and its impact on religious practices.



## 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/>
- 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>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: transit hub - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/comoros/>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Comoros - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/comoros/>