
World Watch Research

Jordan:

Persecution Dynamics

December 2024



Open Doors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

December 2024

© Open Doors International

Open Doors Sverige

sweden@od.org | 019-31 05 00 | www.open-doors.se

Contents

World Watch List 2025 – Top 50.....	2
World Watch List 2025 – Ranks 51-78	4
Copyright, sources and definitions	5
Reporting period	5
Brief country details.....	5
Map of country	6
Dominant persecution engines and drivers.....	7
Brief description of the persecution situation.....	7
Summary of international obligations and rights violations.....	7
Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period	8
Specific examples of positive developments	8
Christian communities and how they are affected.....	8
Areas where Christians face most difficulties.....	9
Position on the World Watch List	10
Persecution engines.....	10
Drivers of persecution.....	12
The Persecution pattern	15
Pressure in the 5 spheres of life.....	16
Violence	20
5 Year trends.....	22
Gender-specific religious persecution / Female	24
Gender-specific religious persecution / Male	25
Persecution of other religious minorities	26
Trends Summary	27
Further useful reports.....	27
External Links	28

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

In the table below, the number of Christians shown is an Open Doors (OD) estimate.

Jordan: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
11,385,000	170,000	1.5

Jordan: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	170,000	1.5
Muslim	10,845,021	95.3
Hindu	0	0.0
Buddhist	0	0.0
Ethnic religionist	0	0.0
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	29,020	0.3
Atheist	55,546	0.5
Agnostic	279,228	2.5
Other	5,684	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 (Adapted according to OD-estimate)

Map of country



Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Jordan:	
Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Clan oppression	Ethnic group leaders, One's own (extended) family
Islamic oppression	Ethnic group leaders, Non-Christian religious leaders, One's own (extended) family, Government officials, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials
Christian denominational protectionism	Religious leaders of other churches, 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

Most Christians in Jordan belong to Orthodox or Roman Catholic churches. Overall, they enjoy a certain level of religious freedom but experience discrimination in employment and restrictions against public preaching. However, an open testimony of faith by a Christian with Muslim background can lead to beatings, arrest and killing. Christians active in evangelism and/or helping converts can face threats and obstruction in daily life.

Compared to Christians living in other Middle Eastern countries, Christians in Jordan can expect to live in relative security. King Abdallah's leadership and government appear to tolerate and - to a certain degree - support recognized churches. However, the state does exert pressure on all Christian communities, especially through monitoring. Unrecognized churches, particularly those that actively evangelize, can face harassment from public authorities. Although Jordan likes to present itself as a beacon of tolerance and interfaith dialogue, radicalized Sunnis and returning jihadists from Syria and Iraq continue to pose a threat to the Christian community.

Jordan has a disproportionately high number of Salafi Muslims who are potentially a danger to Christians and other 'non-conforming' groups living in the country. The state continues to control the preaching in mosques and - in an attempt to rein in radicalism - requires preachers to abstain from talking about politics to avoid social and political unrest.

Summary of international obligations and rights violations

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

1. [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#)
2. [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ICESCR\)](#)
3. [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CAT\)](#)
4. [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)
5. [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)

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

- Christian converts are ostracized and faced with opposition by their families, and threatened with loss of child custody in the case of divorce (ICCPR Art. 18)
- Children of Christian converts are automatically registered as Muslim (ICCPR Art. 18 and CRC Art. 14)
- Christians face workplace discrimination because of their faith (ICCPR Art. 26)
- Christian female converts are forced to marry non-Christian men and pressured to renounce their faith (ICCPR Art. 23; CEDAW Art. 16 and ICESCR Art. 10)

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- Converts and other Christians involved in mission work were called in by the police regularly for questioning.
- Women who do not wear a hijab risk harassment.
- Many converts experienced physical and mental abused from their Islamic families.

Specific examples of positive developments

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

- Throughout 2023, King Abdullah publicly met with several leaders from various Christian denominations. During these engagements, the King emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue and harmony, as well as promoting Hashemite custodianship of Jerusalem’s holy sites.
- In December 2023, Jordanian media reported that upon King Abdullah’s directive, the Jordan Armed Forces airdropped humanitarian aid and food supplies into Gaza, with a specific allocation for Christians within the Church of Saint Porphyrius. Media reports also noted King Abdullah met with Christian leaders in Jordan to affirm Jordan’s commitment to assisting those who had sought refuge in the church. See also reports of further airdrops in [The Jordan Times, 11 June 2024](#).

Christian communities and how they are affected

Officially recognized churches include the Greek Orthodox church, the Syriac Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic and Coptic Orthodox Churches, the Greek, Maronite, and Roman Catholic Churches, the Syriac Church of the East, and the Anglican, Pentecostal, Lutheran and Seventh Day Adventist Churches. Other denominations have lesser legal status (mostly as ‘societies’), including the Baptist, Free Evangelical, Nazarene, Assemblies of God and Alliance churches. (Source: Middle East Concern, [Jordan country profile](#), accessed 27 August 2024)

Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians are present in Jordan, but not as a group involuntarily isolated from other categories of Christian communities. This category is therefore not included in WWL scoring and analysis.

Historical Christian communities: This category makes up the largest group of Christians in Jordan, most of whom belong to Orthodox and Roman Catholic denominations. Overall, they enjoy a certain level of religious freedom but can experience discrimination, e.g. in the area of employment. Some pressure persists, especially from radical Islamic elements though these are kept reasonably well in

check by intelligence and security forces. Long-standing marginalization provides a sense within these communities of being 'second class citizens', and emigration is a continuing issue.

Converts to Christianity: Of all Christians in Jordan, those with a Muslim background are persecuted the most for their faith. If a convert's new faith is discovered, he/she can face oppression from a whole variety of sources, namely government officials, ethnic group leaders, non-Christian religious leaders, violent religious groups, ordinary people and (extended) family. Converts are vulnerable primarily to pressure from family or community for whom restoration of family/tribal/community honor is an imperative that often drives ostracism and sometimes leads to violent responses or initiation of effective legal incapacitation through personal status courts. State authorities are sometimes complicit, either actively through legal processes or through intelligence agents alerting families, or passively through enabling the perpetration of violence with effective impunity.

Children of parents who are converts are additionally vulnerable: Registered as Muslims they are supposed to live as Muslims outside of their homes, including attending Islamic classes - but live as Christians at home, which can lead to identity conflicts and emotional stress. In general, the situation for converts – whose small numbers have been growing – has worsened during the past few years, mostly due to pressure from their families and to the increasing activity of radical Islamic groups.

Non-traditional Christian communities: After converts, Christians from Evangelical, Baptist and Pentecostal congregations face most opposition, in particular those active in missionary work. They are especially scrutinized by the intelligence service and have reportedly suffered from government pressure and hindrances in gaining employment. Violence against these Christians is mostly met with impunity. Most non-traditional Christian communities are not recognized as churches but as societies and as such have legal status, but are not listed in the appendix to the ecclesiastical courts legislation which specifies the churches that can operate personal status courts. Attempts to obtain equivalent status as other church denominations have consistently been resisted, particularly by traditional churches who have accused these churches of "sheep stealing" and of disrupting interreligious stability.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The level of persecution in Jordan is generally the same all over the country, although social control is likely to be higher in rural areas. The south of the country is also known to be more conservatively Islamic.

Position on the World Watch List

Jordan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	65	50
WWL 2024	65	48
WWL 2023	65	49
WWL 2022	66	39
WWL 2021	64	38

In WWL 2025 Jordan scored the same as in WWL 2024 and WWL 2023: 65 points. Jordan nevertheless fell two positions on the list - from rank 48 to 50 - which is due to the effect of other countries' scores. Although there was no change in overall score, the score for violence did rise from 2.2. points in WWL 2024 to 2.4 points, particularly due to damage to a church by stone-throwing neighbors, who found holding a church ceremony inappropriate amid the human suffering in Gaza. Pressure remained extreme in the *Family sphere of life*, where there was also a very slight rise. In all the other spheres of life, the scores stayed either the same or dropped very slightly.

Persecution engines

Jordan: 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	Strong
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Medium
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Very weak

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.

Clan oppression (Strong)

This Persecution engine describes how the continuing influence of age-old norms and values shaped in a tribal context are enforced and can come in the form of traditional religion. In the case of Jordan this is Islam and it especially affects Christians with a Muslim background. Jordan's society is basically tribal - especially outside the major cities - and is embedded in Jordanian nationalism. Jordan is basically divided between native Jordanians ('East Bankers') and Palestinian Jordanians ('West Bankers'). Tribalism has made this ethnic division more apparent and acts as a socio-economic safety-net. Family, clan and tribal connections continue to allow Easterners to successfully navigate government, economic and social spheres, naturally including employment but also including political and social standing. Because of this social advantage for native Jordanians, tribalism has become even more integrated into the Jordanian concept of nationalism. Thus, Christians coming from a Palestinian background may not have as many advantages as a Christian of native Jordanian stock. This issue requires more detailed research.

Islamic oppression (Strong)

Islamic oppression is one of the main Persecution engines in Jordan, but works mostly in non-violent ways. Despite promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence with non-Muslim religions, the government has increasingly imposed Islamic values and laws on society. In terms of personal life, converts from Islam to Christianity face the highest levels of pressure. Their families and community may ostracize them or even commit acts of violence against them. Christians from all categories of Christian community can be subject to government monitoring - and even subject to Sharia law if a Christian is married to a Muslim or is in a court dispute with a Muslim. *Islamic oppression* also works through violent actions carried out by Islamic militants. Oppression by radical Muslims is much more severe than any government oppression. More and more Jordanians are being radicalized by Islamic State ideology, which puts Christians at greater risk.

Islamic oppression is also blended with *Dictatorial paranoia*. In several countries in the Middle East, the king or president plays the 'Islam card' in political crises to stay in power. Thus, to gain the approval or acceptance of the community, they turn to the religious authority to gain power and popularity. This also applies to Jordan. However, this allows Islamic political movements to gain more influence in the communities, which can often lead to the spread of Islamist ideologies and the persecution of Christian minorities.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

Jordan is increasingly being described as a hybrid system that combines procedural democracy with some forms of authoritarianism. The country is still not a full constitutional democracy and the King, together with the general intelligence service, are the main sources of decision-making. Apart from the royal family, the biggest political actors are the government and the tribal chiefs who maintain their (perceived) power, position and privileges. Jordan's stability faces numerous threats; this creates the impression that the King is one of the few factors holding the country together. As head of government, the Jordanian king exercises considerable executive power. While he has been outspoken in his support for the Christian communities of Jordan and the Middle East and the need to maintain this Christian presence, and while he maintains a moderate and pro-Western stance, it is recognized that the King must strike a balance between competing interests, including Islamist currents that tend

to swell in times of economic hardship or in response to regional events. In previous years, there were times when the King found it necessary to show his Islamic credentials by imposing stricter restrictions on Christians (e.g., by expelling foreign Christians). Internally, therefore, maintaining peace and meeting the interests of the Muslim majority appears to be the top priority.

Christian denominational protectionism (Medium)

The fragmentation of the Church is a typical feature of Jordanian Christianity. Tension exists between established Historical church communities and newer church groups (which are often influenced by international charismatic and evangelical movements). This is because evangelicals generally accept converts from Islam as well as Christians from traditional churches into their congregations. According to evangelical leaders, it is primarily Greek Orthodox (but sometimes Catholic) leaders who are exerting pressure on newer denominations. They use their channels of political influence to assert their historical traditions as the only true expression of Jordanian Christianity, while labeling evangelicals or other 'newcomers' as inappropriate due to their Western influence. Applications made by church groups for official recognition are discussed by the prime minister with the Department of the Interior (MOI) and the CCL (Council of Church Leaders), which mainly includes representatives of recognized historical churches. Thus the latter have a major influence on the official recognition or - more often - rejection of newer denominations.

Drivers of persecution

Jordan: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	STRONG	-	-	STRONG	MEDIUM	-	-	MEDIUM	VERY WEAK
Government officials	Medium	-	-	Weak	Medium	-	-	Medium	-
Ethnic group leaders	Strong	-	-	Very strong	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Christian religious leaders	Strong	-	-	Weak	-	-	-	-	-
Religious leaders of other churches	-	-	-	-	Strong	-	-	-	-
Violent religious groups	Weak	-	-	-	-	-	-	Weak	-

(table continues below)

Jordan: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	STRONG	-	-	STRONG	MEDIUM	-	-	MEDIUM	VERY WEAK
Ideological pressure groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium	-	-	Weak	-	-	-	-	Weak
One's own (extended) family	Strong	-	-	Very strong	Weak	-	-	-	-
Political parties	Weak	-	-	-	-	-	-	Weak	-
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Organized crime cartels or networks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.) and embassies	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. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

Drivers of Clan oppression

- **Extended family and ethnic group leaders (Very strong):** Clan oppression involves the imposition of age-old norms and values shaped in 'tribal' context and is often blended with *Islamic oppression*. In this case, the drivers are particularly families of converts and tribal leaders. Most pressure comes from the family, which can even lead to serious violence and killing. Tribalism is strong in Jordan and ethnic group leaders are also likely to attempt to influence converts into renouncing their new faith, in order to protect the honor of the tribe. The same is true for Islamic leaders, who consider converts still to be Muslims.

Drivers of Islamic oppression

- **Ethnic group leaders (Strong):** Tribal leaders are likely to put pressure on members of their tribe who are known to have converted and can act as a judge to save the tribe's honor.

- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** Converts also fear hostile pronouncements or actions by Islamic leaders. This fear contributes to the sense of oppression and marginalization felt by indigenous Christians and also to the high degree of caution converts from Islam feel compelled to exercise. Attacks on targets deemed un-Islamic such as churches and shops where alcohol is sold are reportedly encouraged by local and regional radical Islamic teachers. In this respect, independent Salafi and Wahhabi individuals pose a threat to Christians within Jordan: These are not necessarily leaders, but are influential either in person or on social media. Mainstream Islamic leaders contribute to alienation between Muslims and Christians in practice and dress code (e.g. hijab clothing, no co-educational gatherings or swimming etc.).
- **Extended family (Strong):** Family hostility is commonly understood to be the major form of pressure faced by Christians from a Muslim background. A significant aspect of this pressure is the fear of provoking violent reactions from immediate or extended family. Muslim converts to Christianity are likely to face ostracism and discrimination from their families - and perhaps even violence, including killing. In some cases, converts' families informed government officials who then put pressure on converts to return to Islam.
- **Government officials (Medium):** The government seems to be genuine in its affirmation of Jordan's Historical church communities and in seeking to ensure the security of all churches to avoid social unrest. Nevertheless, government policies and staff are the cause of much pressure on Christians from all categories of Christian community, but in particular on converts from Islam and those involved in ministry among them. This pressure is exerted formally through the personal status court system. In the government's monitoring of Christians and their activities, the intelligence service plays an important role as well as local governors and airport police (for instance, in denying exit for known converts).
- **Citizens (Medium):** Ordinary citizens can act to suppress Christian witness to non-Christians (affecting converts from Islam in particular), especially in more conservative Islamic areas such as in the south. Social media offers an additional platform for targeting Christians with hate-speech.

Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** While genuine in its affirmation of Jordan's Historical church communities and in seeking to ensure the security of all established churches, government policies and personnel nevertheless underpin much pressure against Christians - including against those churches that have secondary status, and - in particular - against Christians from a Muslim background. This pressure is often carried out in collaboration with families, and more formally through the personal status court system.

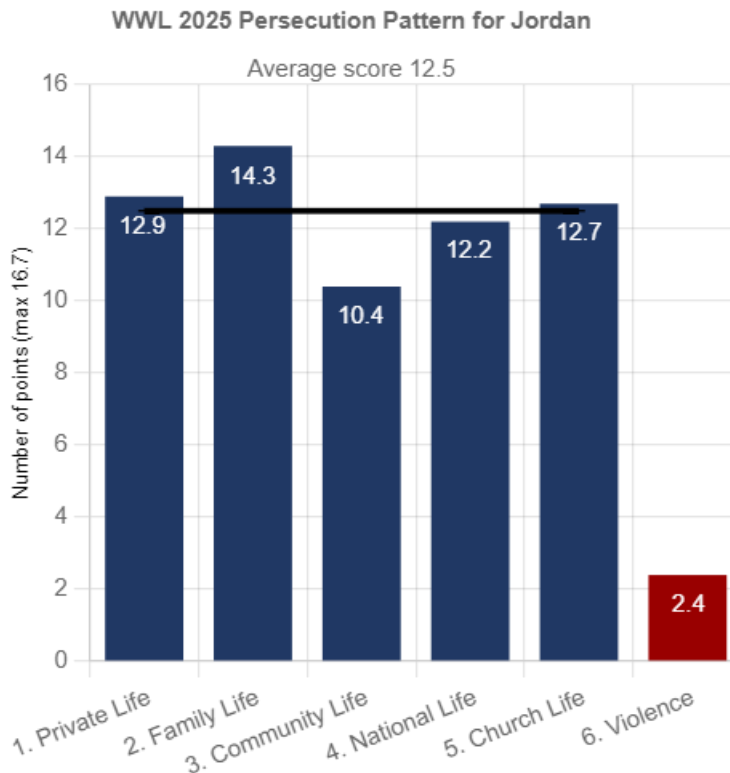
Christian denominational protectionism

- **Religious leaders of other churches (Strong):** As explained above, Evangelicals cite this as a significant source of pressure - primarily Greek Orthodox (but also at times Catholic) leaders using their political influence to assert their church tradition as the only genuine expression of Jordanian Christianity. In January 2021, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Christoforos Atallah wrote a formal letter to Jordan's Judicial Council denouncing Evangelical Christians as a "danger"

to Jordanian society with "strange ideas that depart from our Christian faith and the national identity of our local church." This pressure campaign succeeded in preventing Evangelical Christians being recognized as an approved denomination by the Jordanian state. This action put at risk the Jordanian government's recognition of marriage, birth, and other personal status issues for 10,000 Evangelical Christians, the vast majority of whom are Jordanian citizens.

- **Government officials (Medium):** The government is used in *Christian denominational protectionism* as a tool by the Historical churches to prevent the recognition of non-traditional church groups. Also, Eastern Rite churches have strong ties to the Jordanian security services, and according to a country expert there were anecdotal reports of "intelligence sharing" concerning Evangelical Christians between Eastern Rite clergy and the Jordanian security services.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2025 persecution pattern for Jordan shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Jordan – mainly on converts from Islam - is at a very high level (12.5 points), very slightly lower (0.1 point) than in WWL 2024.
- Pressure is at very high levels in all *spheres of life* with the exception of *Family Life* (extreme pressure) and *Community Life* (high pressure), especially affecting converts to Christianity. Apart from *Family Life*, scores are highest in the *Private* and *Church spheres of life*. This is typical for a situation in which *Clan oppression* is the main persecution engine combined with *Islamic oppression*.
- The score for violence increased very slightly from 2.2 points in WWL 2024 to 2.4, due mainly to a church being damaged by members of the local Islamic community.

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)

Though not criminalized, leaving Islam is not acceptable. Anyone who converts and is open about this can be referred to the Islamic Sharia Court where he/she would be found "without religion" and considered incapacitated. All his/her contracts would then be broken (including marriage) and he/she would be worse off than someone who is cognitively incapacitated. Converts are frequently targeted for monitoring and may face harassment from the secret police and be blacklisted. They are then prevented from taking up employment in the armed forces or posts in the government or in building companies, for instance. On a societal level, converts are likely to be ostracized and face hostility from family or tribe members; they might also face violence and police interrogation. Particularly women are likely to face house-arrest, forced marriages and other measures intended to restore 'family honor'. Also, Christians who change from attending a Historical church community to join a non-traditional Evangelical church are also likely to face significant pressure from family and community.

Block 1.8: It has been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those other than immediate family (extended family, others). (3.50 points)

This would particularly represent a risk for Christians from a Muslim background. Since their main source of pressure is from family and community, most converts exercise extreme caution when discussing issues of faith with family and community members as this can lead to violent reactions. Also, if non-convert Christians speak about Christian faith to Muslims or adherents of other religions, this can easily be understood as an attempt at evangelizing (which is forbidden in Jordan) and a threat to national security. They may be reported to the intelligence service and blacklisted.

Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (3.25 points)

This primarily applies to Christians from a Muslim background where they belong to families who limit their interaction with others due to suspicion or disapproval. Such interaction with other Christians would be seen as betrayal of their ancestral faith, and betrayal of family and tribe.

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.). (3.00 points)

If, for instance, a Christian from a Muslim background was caught accessing Christian online content by a disapproving member of the family or community, this could lead to negative repercussions. Such a reaction is especially likely if converts mention their decision to become a Christian. This would effectively be self-incrimination, providing evidence of their own apostasy. Their conversion could also be used as evidence against them by family, society and officials.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.6: Christian couples have been hindered in adopting children or serving as foster parents because of their faith. (3.75 points)

Adoption remains illegal for all Jordanians as per Islamic doctrine. Foster care is complicated and it is close to impossible for Christians to foster a Muslim child. Several years ago, a Christian ministry tried to open a Christian orphanage and they were denied a license on similar grounds.

Block 2.1: Babies and children of Christians have automatically been registered under the state or majority religion. (3.50 points)

Children of converts from Islam are automatically registered as Muslim. Also, children born to a Christian mother and a Muslim father are considered Muslim by birth. Since the parents cannot change their recorded faith on official documents, their children will be registered as Muslim. This brings with it a whole range of difficulties for the child in daily life (including participation in Islamic classes at school etc.). This forces these children to live a double life - an Islamic one in the public sphere and a Christian one at home. This can lead to identity conflicts and emotional stress, which is detrimental to their development. It also puts a lot of pressure on their parents.

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

For a Christian from a Muslim background, baptism would usually be conducted in secret to avoid exposure and potential backlash.

Block 2.12: Christian spouses of non-Christians have been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases. (3.50 points)

This pressure is not uncommon among Christians from a Muslim background who have a non-Christian spouse and/or whose wider family members exercise significant control. Since - according to Islamic law - those who leave Islam lose custody of any children, some have had their right of custody forcibly removed by the Sharia personal status courts.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

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)

Monitoring is especially intense for known converts from Islam. For non-convert Christians, informal monitoring is routinely undertaken (often using community informers), particularly affecting those active in evangelism. However, Jordan's General Intelligence Department carries out surveillance operations with a broad range of objectives which means that monitoring is by no means exclusively applied to Christian communities. Monitoring includes phone-calls and social media usage.

Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (3.50 points)

Despite the fact that nine out of 130 seats in the Chamber of Deputies are reserved for Christians and they also routinely serve as ministers and are well represented in the higher ranks of the military,

Christians are a minority with less visible presence in daily life than they used to have. Tribal culture is very strong in Jordan and there are unwritten rules about what Christians can and cannot do or say, which severely limit their freedom of expression. This is even more true for Jordanians of Palestinian descent. Converts to Christianity cannot participate at all in community institutions and forums if their faith is known. It is highly unlikely that a convert would want to be actively involved, and Christian viewpoints have no place in these forums anyway.

Block 3.7: Christians have been pressured by their community to renounce their faith. (3.50 points)

Pressure can be expected on converts from Islam whose Christian faith has become known, especially where the local community is made up of conservative Muslim families. This is in keeping with provisions in Islamic law relating to apostasy which hold that an apostate must be offered the opportunity to recant. For other Christians, there is also a 'well intended' invitation to become a Muslim.

Block 3.10: Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons. (3.50 points)

This primarily applies to converts from Islam whose Christian faith has become known. Cases have been reported in which Christians have repeatedly lost or been denied the opportunity of employment because of their conversion. In some sectors this pressure can also apply to non-convert Christians, especially in relation to obtaining promotion to senior positions. Security clearance can also be problematic. There were accounts of Christians getting denied internships, employment, and even medical school placements in military hospitals. Promotion in the administration and armed forces has a pro-Muslim bias, although nine parliamentary seats are reserved for Christians and Christians have been selected to work as ministers on a regular basis.

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. (3.75 points)

The Constitution of Jordan establishes Islam as the state religion and Sharia as the principal source of legislation. In that context, it is not officially possible to leave Islam to convert to another religion (or carry out non-Islamic evangelism). This goes against Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While the Constitution affirms the principle of non-discrimination (including discrimination on the basis of religion) and states that the free exercise of worship and religious rites are to be safeguarded, these must be consistent with 'public order and morality'. Recognized non-Muslim communities are given freedom to govern most personal status issues according to their own rites through a religious tribunal system, although some communities, many of them non-traditional church groups, do not currently have the level of legal status required to operate their own tribunals.

Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.75 points)

In light of the current cyber crime laws and government history of arrests, freedom of speech is very limited. Christians understand the need to avoid deliberately provocative statements, especially statements that are critical of Islam, the Crown, the army or which could be construed as proselytizing. It is a criminal offense in Jordan to insult Islam. Additionally, converts from Islam to Christianity must

be careful about openly expressing their opinions due to potential backlash from the community and possibly becoming ostracized. As such, self-censorship is quite frequent which limits the expression of Christian viewpoints.

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

There is no legal mechanism for changing official religious affiliation from Islam to another (or no) religion, based on the apostasy provisions of Islamic law. Although apostasy is not criminalized, personal status courts can impose severe sanctions. It should be noted that, although religious affiliation no longer appears on National ID cards, this remains on official files as personal status court jurisdiction is determined by religious affiliation. Few Christians from a Muslim background dare to attempt to change the officially recorded religious affiliation from Islam, since making such an application exposes their conversion to the authorities and is potentially dangerous. Some have pursued this via the legal system and failed.

Block 4.14: Those who caused harm to Christians have deliberately been left unpunished. (3.50 points)

Perpetrators of persecution against converts from Islam on account of their faith (including so-called 'honor crimes'), can expect to enjoy a high degree of impunity. Within non-convert Christian communities, frustration has also been expressed about the degree of impunity given to perpetrators of violence and hate-speech.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.7: Churches have been hindered from openly integrating converts. (4.00 points)

The incorporation of converts into recognized church congregations is an extremely sensitive subject. Routine surveillance by state intelligence officers means that most church leaders would be wary of openly welcoming and accepting Muslim enquirers or converts, fearing negative repercussions, including possible closure of the church. Also, they would be suspicious of people openly claiming to be converts, since this could be a trap.

Block 5.8: Christian preaching, teaching and/or published materials have been monitored. (3.75 points)

Most church leaders accept the fact that there is some routine surveillance of activities on church premises, including the content of what is preached and taught. They effectively exercise self-censorship by avoiding provocative or inflammatory messaging, such as mentioning evangelism among Muslims or anything that could be perceived as derogatory towards Islam, or any political commentary which could instigate social or political unrest. Especially in Muslim-majority areas, openly preaching, teaching and/or publishing Christian materials could bring strong social pressure on the person doing those activities. This especially affects Christians belonging to non-traditional and convert communities. Books can only be published after getting approval from the Ministry of Culture. Anything that will aggravate Islam - for instance, apologetics - will not be allowed.

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.50 points)

There is a level of routine monitoring of church activities, ostensibly for the protection of churches. However, such monitoring could be used against churches if provocative messages or activities were detected, or if Muslims were observed to be attending. Known meetings of Christians with an Islamic background are very likely to be closely monitored and obstructed.

Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.50 points)

Any form of worship or Christian activity outside designated church property must be undertaken with discretion to avoid provoking hostile reactions and the accusation of proselytism.

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.*

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

Details of places and dates cannot be provided for security reasons. In the WWL 2025 reporting period:

- **Churches damaged:** In northern Jordan during Ramadan in spring 2024, a church service was disrupted by Muslim neighbors who threw stones, claiming that celebrations were inappropriate amidst the ongoing violence in Gaza. Several church windows were damaged in the incident.
- **Christians detained:** Christians involved in outreach and converts can be called in regularly for questioning. It is unknown beforehand how long this will take, it can vary from 20 minutes to 12 days.

- **Christians sexually harassed:** Women who do not dress as a Muslim (i.e., who do not wear a hijab) risk harassment. It is estimated that at least 10 Christian women were sexually harassed for this reason. Therefore, many Christian women choose not to use public transport or taxis, especially at night.
- **Christians physically or mentally abused:** Several converts (and Christians active in aiding and discipling converts) have been physically or mentally abused, usually by the families of the converts.

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.

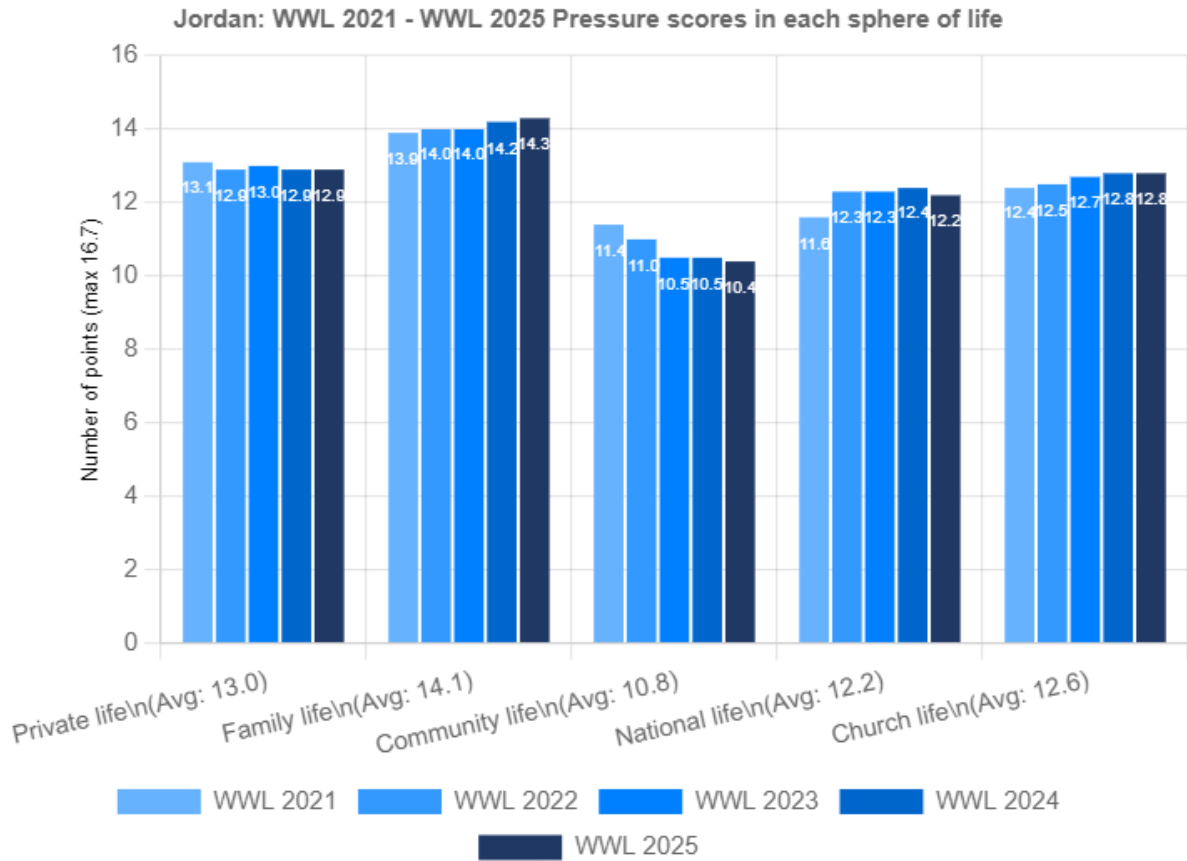
5 Year trends: Average pressure

Jordan: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	12.5
2024	12.6
2023	12.5
2022	12.5
2021	12.5

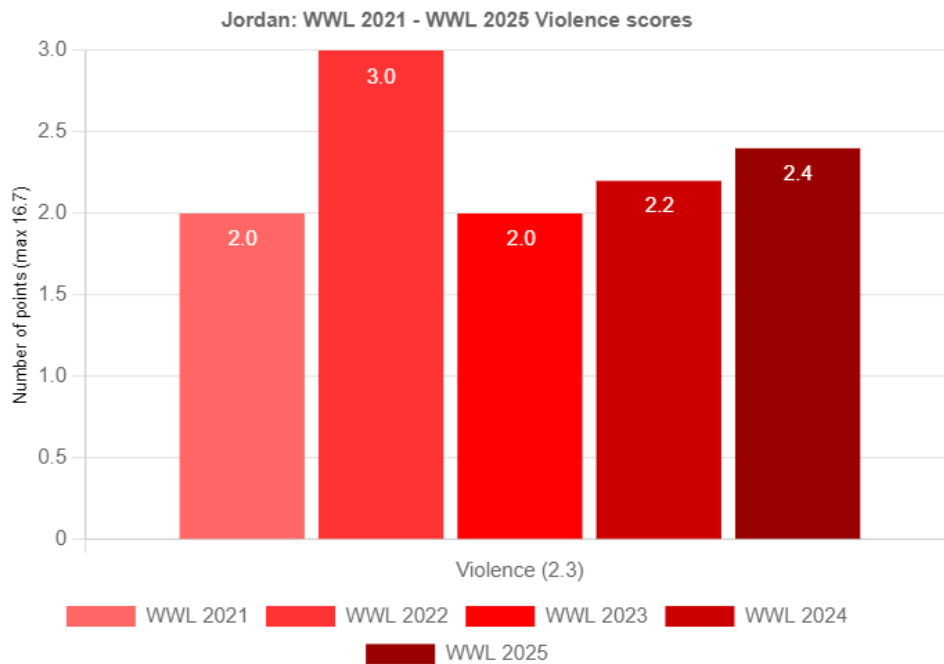
The table above shows how the overall score for pressure on Christians has remained stable in the last five reporting periods at a very high level of 12.5/12.6 points.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life

As can be seen in the blue graph below, pressure in the *Private sphere of life* has been more or less stable in the five most recent reporting periods (WWL 2021-2025). Over the same period, pressure in the *Family* and *Church spheres* has shown a rising tendency, and pressure in *Community life* a falling tendency. *Family life* is the only sphere to have reached an extreme level of pressure, which is characteristic for a persecution situation where both *Clan oppression* and *Islamic oppression* (blended) are the strongest persecution engines.



5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



The violence scores have varied between low and fairly high, but have never gone above 3.0 points in the five most recent WWL reporting periods.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

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

Denied access to social community/networks
 Denied custody of children
 Denied legal ability to marry Christian spouse
 Enforced religious dress code
 Forced marriage
 Incarceration by family (house arrest)
 Travel bans/restrictions on movement
 Violence - death
 Violence - physical
 Violence - sexual
 Violence - verbal

Female converts from Islam are the most vulnerable to persecution for their Christian faith in Jordan. This is especially notable, considering the many refugees in Jordan. Pressure comes most often from family members. If a female convert still lives with her family, she risks verbal abuse, isolation, and sexual harassment. Female converts can also be prevented from meeting with other like-minded Christians as a punishment for conversion and to prevent the individual from bringing more shame upon the family. Although arranged marriages are not uncommon in Jordan, female converts are under additional threat to be married off involuntarily in a further effort to retain family honor and bring the daughter back on 'the right path'. A country expert commented that female converts are vulnerable to forced marriage, which is "usually to a conservative Muslim, as a corrective measure". In addition, honor killings remain a risk for converts in rural areas, although such killings are now punishable.

Female converts from Islam cannot officially marry men from a Christian background. Even if they marry abroad, the state does not recognize such marriages. When married to non-Christian husbands, female converts risk harassment and verbal abuse (women might also face similar challenges if their formerly Christian husband converts to Islam). They are also faced with travel restrictions; travel bans can be imposed by the authorities but also by family members, for instance to prevent the female convert from leaving the country. If this ban is violated, a court case can be started for "travelling without permission".

Female converts are also vulnerable under Islamic Family Law (which is used for personal status matters in Jordan among Muslims) and are likely to lose the guardianship of their children. The attitude of the non-Christian spouse's family is crucial in this issue. The recognized churches in Jordan have been working on the [revision of personal status laws](#), to improve the position of women regarding divorce and inheritance rights (Zenith, 25 October 2019). In 2023, progress was also made in the form of a [draft law](#) to grant equal inheritance equal inheritance rights for male and female Christians (Christianity Middle East, 20 May 2023). Indeed, [implementation](#) by the Orthodox Church began in 2024 (Roya News, 31 March 2024). However, it is important to note that this will only apply to Christians from a non-Islamic background, as Sharia law will continue to apply to all converts.

On a wider level, all Christian women face pressure to follow a specified dress code, especially outside of the big cities like Amman, and are at risk of sexual harassment within the public sphere.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Jordan	Male Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
	Denied legal ability to marry Christian spouse Economic harassment via business/job/work access Forced out of home – expulsion Forced to flee town/country Imprisonment by government Violence – physical Violence – psychological

Within Jordan’s heavily Islamic context, Christian men – particularly converts – face a wide range of pressure for their faith. While some Christian men do occupy senior positions in the workplace, government and armed forces, job discrimination continues to affect all Christians, especially those from a Muslim background. General unemployment rates for all men in Jordan have risen in recent years and remain higher than pre-pandemic levels, with a reported 22.3% of people out of work and a 46.1% youth unemployment rate ([World Bank overview Jordan](#), accessed 31 December 2024). This has increased the pressure on men who have lost their jobs because of their Christian faith. If their faith becomes known, Christian men with a Muslim background can be denied security clearances and jobs. In the mostly traditional and tribal Jordanian society where men are regarded as the financial providers for their families, this can cause economic troubles for the wider family, as well as feelings of worthlessness for men.

Under Sharia, marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men are not allowed. For the marriage to be legal, the man must convert to Islam. This makes legal marriage impossible between a Christian man who is not a convert and a Christian woman with a Muslim background. Sharia law also determines that if a Christian wife converts to Islam, her husband must convert as well for their marriage to remain legal.

Men who are converts to Christianity face further difficulties in an honor-shame culture when their families reject them and expel them from their homes because of their choice of religion. Christian men also face psychological pressure and physical violence; in his book ‘Identity Crisis’ Jonathan Andrews refers to a specific case of a Christian convert who within the Jordanian legal system “no longer had legal personality, anybody could take his possessions ... and injuring him would be regarded in law in the same manner as injuring a rodent, giving total impunity to the perpetrator” (Identity Crisis: Religious Registration in the Middle East, 2016, Gilead Books Publishing). There is also pressure from the state authorities: Male converts are reported to be interrogated by intelligence services and placed under pressure to provide information on other Christians, especially if they are part of a ministry helping converts. Pastors and denominational leaders involved in evangelization and/or

ministry among former Muslims are also targeted for interviews and may receive death-threats from the families of converts.

Persecution of other religious minorities

In general, the authorities in Jordan tend to be "repressive" towards non-Sunni groups and communities such as Shiites, Bahai, Druze, Iraqi Mandaeans and Jehovah's Witnesses. These are not officially recognized and therefore suffer various forms of discrimination.

Shia Islam is especially prevalent among Syrian and Iraqi refugees. It is reportedly harder for a Sunni to convert to Shiite Islam than to convert to Christianity.

As an unrecognized religion, activities by Bahai can be banned, although most Bahai adherents are unofficially allowed to practice their religion. The government also involved them in officially sponsored interfaith events. Marriage certificates issued by Bahai assemblies are not recognized by the Department of Civil Status and Passports. However, according to the US State Department ([IRFR 2023 Jordan](#)):

- "The Department of Civil Status and Passports also continued not to recognize marriages conducted by Baha'i assemblies, but it issued family books to Baha'is, allowing them to register their children, except in cases of marriages between a Baha'i man and a Baha'i woman when the marriage was erroneously registered as Muslim. In those cases, the children were considered illegitimate and were not issued birth certificates or included in family books and subsequently were unable to obtain citizenship or register for school. Baha'i parents could generally designate a dash in lieu of assigning Islam or the Christian religion on their children's birth certificates. There were cases of daughters of Baha'i converts unable to marry Baha'i men because the birth certificates and official documents of the women maintained their religious designation as Islam, the prior faith of their fathers. Some members of the Baha'i Faith reported erroneous religious designations on birth certificates and official documents persisted for third-generation Baha'is."
- "Baha'is were able to obtain some documents such as marriage certificates through the civil courts, although they reportedly were required to pay fees that sometimes amounted to more than 500 dinars (\$710) for documents normally available for five dinars (\$7) through religious courts. Some Baha'is traveled to other countries to obtain officially recognized marriages and others sought marriages from sympathetic Muslim clergy, a process that Baha'is deemed unsustainable and unacceptable. Members of the Baha'i community stated that they continued to lobby the government unsuccessfully for recognition of Baha'is or at least for marriages, which are a requirement for their civil rights including transmitting citizenship to non-Jordanian spouses."

Druze experience social exclusion and live in specific areas. Like the Bahai religion, the Druze faith is also not officially recognized by the Jordanian government and as they do not have their own religious buildings they continue to worship in Sunni Muslim mosques.

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

- The "government continued to record Druze as Muslims on civil documents identifying the bearer's religious affiliation, without public objection from the Druze. Druze continued to report discrimination, and the way constituencies were geographically distributed hindered their coreligionists from reaching high positions in government civil service and official departments. The government did not include members of the Druze community in the Political Modernization Committee, established by the King in 2021 to reform the political system."

Trends Summary

1) Jordanian society is becoming increasingly polarized

There has been increasing concern regarding the growth of Islamic conservatism, especially due to the Gaza conflict that started in October 2023, which has led to more public support for Islamist groups. However, while King Abdullah II continues to advocate for tolerance and the protection of the Christian community, there are reports of social tensions. The social environment has become somewhat less tolerant, and there are signs of growing anti-Christian sentiment, though this does not necessarily reflect public opinion throughout the whole nation.

2) Jordan's economic difficulties could lead to serious social and political unrest

The Economist Intelligence Unit ([EIU Jordan profile 2024](#)) expects King Abdullah II to remain in power for the next few years, "supported by the loyal armed forces. However, security challenges are mounting as the risk of a regional proliferation of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza grows, and as infiltration by Syrian drug smuggling groups increase. Economic growth will remain sluggish over the forecast period, especially in the short-term as tourism is hit by the the Gaza conflict." The country's political stability depends on its economic prosperity and its success in involving the population in economic progress. Jordan's economic difficulties as well as the tensions in the region could lead to more social and political unrest that could negatively affect Christians and other minorities. As an absolute minority, Christians are concerned about any possible sign of crisis, especially if it affects the core of the political system that has always been a guarantee of protection.

3) Jordan's king wants the country portrayed as one that protects religious minorities

In general, many Christians in Jordan strongly believe that their security depends on the Hashemite king who has reiterated his desire to "protect the existence and identity of Arab Christians" in the kingdom. It is important for Jordan to portray the country as one that wants to modernize society step by step and is trying to implement measures that are beneficial to religious minorities including the monitoring of Islamic preaching and the general activities of Salafists, who are a significant threat to future stability.

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: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>
- 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>
- Specific examples of positive developments: IRFR 2023 Jordan - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/jordan/>
- Specific examples of positive developments: The Jordan Times, 11 June 2024 - <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanian-army-carries-out-over-100-airdrops-aid-gaza-alone-257-cooperation-other>
- Church spectrum today - additional information: Jordan country profile - <https://www.meconcern.org/countries/jordan/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: revision of personal status laws - <https://magazine.zenith.me/en/society/christians-jordan-church-and-legal-reform>
<https://magazine.zenith.me/en/society/christians-jordan-church-and-legal-reform>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: draft law - <https://christianitymiddleeast.gr/resources/newsfeed/1171-christians-in-jordan-welcome-progress-on-inheritance-law>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: implementation - <https://en.royanews.tv/news/50412>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: World Bank overview Jordan - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Jordan - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/jordan/>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Jordan - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/jordan/>
- Trends Summary: EIU Jordan profile 2024 - <https://www.eiu.com/n/geography/jordan/>