
World Watch Research

Qatar:

Persecution Dynamics

January 2025



Open Doors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

January 2025

© 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.....	9
Areas where Christians face most difficulties.....	10
Position on the World Watch List	10
Persecution engines.....	10
Drivers of persecution.....	12
The Persecution pattern	14
Pressure in the 5 spheres of life.....	15
Violence	19
5 Year trends.....	22
Gender-specific religious persecution / Female	23
Gender-specific religious persecution / Male	24
Persecution of other religious minorities	25
Trends Summary	26
Further useful reports.....	27
External Links	27

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

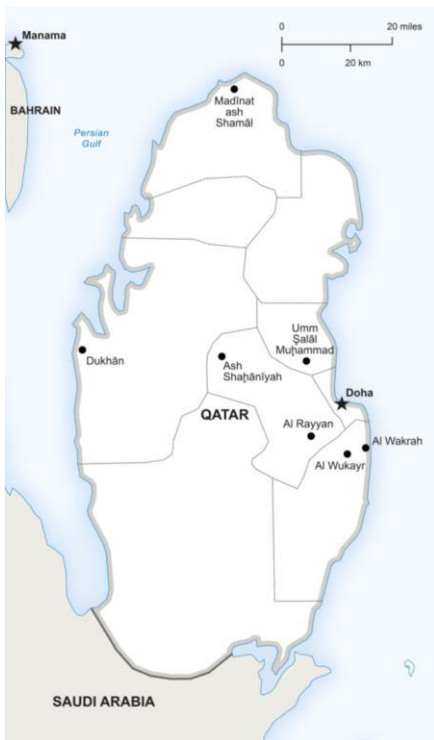
Qatar: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
2,737,000	381,000	13.9

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

Qatar: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	381,000	13.9
Muslim	1,779,000	65.0
Hindu	460,000	16.8
Buddhist	53,900	2.0
Ethnic religionist	0	0.0
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	16,200	0.6
Atheist	3,300	0.1
Agnostic	42,500	1.6
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

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

There are two categories of Christian communities in Qatar; they are separate from each other and have to be careful when interacting with each other. The largest group - the community of expatriate Christians - is made up of Christian migrant workers. Proselytizing Muslims is strictly forbidden and can lead to prosecution and deportation. However, large worship events have been allowed in the past. A major issue remains the lack of sufficient church space, since only a select number of churches have been allowed to establish buildings at the official Religious Complex outside the capital, Doha. Many migrant workers have to live and work in poor conditions, while their Christian faith adds to their vulnerability.

The other group consists of converts from Islam to Christianity. Both converts from an indigenous and migrant background bear the brunt of persecution. Converts with Qatari citizenship face very high pressure from their Muslim families. Converts from a migrant background are primarily controlled by the social environment they live in. Often, the social norms of their home countries apply to them rather than Qatari cultural norms. In some cases, they can avoid pressure by living within an international community, rather than their own ethnic community. Nonetheless, even their employers can be a source of persecution. Both indigenous and migrant converts risk discrimination, harassment and police monitoring. Moreover, a change of faith (away from Islam) is not officially recognized and is likely to lead to legal problems in personal status and property matters.

There are hardly ever reports of Christians being killed, imprisoned or harmed for their faith, because the number of converts is low and they keep their faith as secret as possible.

Summary of international obligations and rights violations

Qatar 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)

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

- Christians face restrictions in employment in the public sector and experience discrimination in the private sector (ICCPR Arts. 25 and 26, and ICESCR Art. 6)
- Christian converts are ostracized and faced with opposition by their families, and threatened with divorce and loss of child custody (ICCPR Art. 18)
- Christian children are harassed because of their parents' faith (ICCPR Art. 18 and CRC Art. 14)
- Christians face harassment and violence if they talk about their faith or engage in proselytization (ICCPR Arts. 18 and 19)

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

Violent incidents against Christians are rarely reported. Incidents where Christian migrant workers are targeted probably go unreported because it is in nobody's interest to make details public; the victim wants to keep his or her job and other actors (like the government) are not interested in having a record of such occurrences on their files. Secondly, it is sometimes difficult to discern whether or not a case of mistreatment has been due to a worker's Christian faith. However, it is estimated that thousands of expatriate Christians face abuse. According to a 2020 report by [Amnesty International](#) (AI, "Why do you want to rest", 2020), thousands of migrant workers are suffering from labor abuses despite the official abolishment of the *kafala* system in 2020 and laws to improve labor conditions. As highlighted in an [earlier report](#) (AI, "My Sleep Is My Break", 2014), (sexual) abuse of female migrant workers, many of whom are Christian, is common.

Specific examples of positive developments

- According to the [US State Department's IRFR 2023](#): "In November [2023], the government gave permission to the Evangelical Church Alliance in Qatar (ECAQ) to build a church at the Mesaymeer Religious Complex, also known as 'Church City' and located on government-owned land, allocating a plot of land for construction of the church. Sixty villa churches were registered with the Ministry of Interior as worshipping under ECAQ's umbrella."
- Qatar continues to encourage interfaith dialogue, for example via the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID). Although very much connected to government efforts to boost its diplomatic ties with the Western world (which in Qatari eyes is seen as Christian), it has nevertheless helped to create a more tolerant attitude towards Christians in the country. In 2023, DICID organized a number of conferences in Qatar, including the "Global Youth Interfaith & Intercultural Forum" ([ACWAY, accessed 28 July 2023](#)) and the "Conference From Religious Freedom to Religious Responsibility (Building Communities of Advocacy and Action)" ([Gulf Times, 11 May 2023](#)).
- In 2019, Qatar's Emir Tamim ben Hamad al-Thani personally financed the building of a church in Lebanon ([Asia News, 1 April 2019](#)). Qatar's first official Christian house of worship in modern times was built in 2008; the second was opened in 2009.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Of the four WWL categories of Christianity, two exist in Qatar:

Communities of expatriate Christians: The level of persecution varies within this category. For instance, low-skilled workers (e.g. construction workers) from low or middle income countries have a low social status and are generally treated worse than expatriates from the Western world working in more skilled occupations. Therefore, workers from Asia and Africa are treated badly, independently of their religion. If such workers are Christian, this can add to their vulnerability and there can be pressure to become Muslims. They are not free to openly practice their faith and many among them hardly have the opportunity to attend church services in the special Religious Complex built on land provided by the authorities outside of the capital, Doha. There are traffic and parking problems at the church complex and many Christians think that the area provided is too small to house all Christians in Qatar gathering for worship. In September 2020, Christians gathering in private villas for worship were told that in future they may only meet at the official Mesaymeer Religious Complex, although the authorities are fully aware that this complex is overcrowded. It is not unlikely that this September 2020 stipulation is the reason why church groups meeting in private homes (villas) received no notification about re-opening after the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions in 2021. However, the 60 villa churches recognized under the umbrella of the ECAQ (Evangelical Church Alliance Qatar) continued to gather for worship during WWL 2025.

A positive development in 2015 was that the government allotted land within the church complex for the recently registered Lebanese Maronite and Filipino Evangelical congregations to build churches. The foundation stone for the Maronite church was laid in April 2018 and the church is expected to open in 2025 ([Catholic News Agency, 10 May 2024](#)). In November 2023, the Evangelical Church Alliance in Qatar (ECAQ) was given permission to build a church as well (see also above: *Specific examples of positive developments*).

Historical Christian communities: These communities are not treated as a separate category for scoring in WWL analysis, since all Christians here belong to the expatriate category.

Converts to Christianity: Christians with a Muslim background are heavily persecuted in Qatar. They are considered apostates and face discrimination and harassment from society and even risk being killed by their family. Apostasy is also a crime punishable under the criminal law. However, no execution or other punishment for apostasy has been recorded since the country's independence in 1971. Almost all Qatari Christians converted abroad and the majority of them do not return to the country out of fear. Converts face pressure from both family members and the local community to recant their Christian faith. Most converts are foreign workers. The level of pressure on both indigenous and foreign converts is very high. Converts from a migrant background face high pressure and are controlled by their social environment in the labor camps they live in. Even their Muslim employers are likely to be a source of persecution.

The harsh reaction against converts has to be understood in the context of tribalism. Family and clan ties are very strong and religion is never just a matter of private belief, it is part of the identity of the (extended) families combined in their tribe. Converting and leaving Islam is therefore not just a change of belief, it also means leaving the family. This poses a threat to the loyalty of the group, since

appearing to be weak is a huge shame for the family, which explains the fierce ways in which families deal with converts.

Non-traditional Christian communities: These communities are not treated as a separate category for scoring in WWL analysis, since all Christians here belong to the expatriate category.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

Qatar is a very small country with the capital Doha being the center of all activities. The risks faced by Christians, and especially by converts from Islam to Christianity, depend on what sort of community the Christians are part of - see above: *Christian communities and how they are affected*.

Position on the World Watch List

Qatar: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	67	41
WWL 2024	67	40
WWL 2023	68	34
WWL 2022	74	18
WWL 2021	67	29

In WWL 2025, the overall score for Qatar remained the same as in WWL 2024. Average pressure on Christians, especially on converts from Islam to Christianity, remained at a very high level. Converts both from an indigenous and migrant background experience the most difficulty in living out their faith. Converts continued to face restrictions and persecution from the government, society and their own families.

Persecution engines

Qatar: 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	Not at all
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all

(table continues below)

Qatar: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
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)

The state religion is strictly conservative Wahhabi Islam. While Muslims are free to worship in public, non-Muslim religious groups (such as Christians) can only worship in private houses or designated places. Proselytizing is outlawed and can lead to sentences of up to ten years imprisonment. Criticism of Islam is a punishable offence. Conversion from Islam to another religion constitutes apostasy, which is forbidden and anyway socially unacceptable. Family law is regulated by *Sharia*, the Islamic legislation. Nearly all Qatari citizens and nationals are by definition either Sunni or Shia Muslims.

Different levels of persecution exist depending on the background of the converts from Islam to Christianity. Those from a Qatari background face highest levels of pressure. For converts from Islam with other backgrounds, such as those originating from Pakistan or the Levant (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories and Syria, among other countries), much depends on the response within their surrounding community in Qatar. As long as they do not create unrest, they have less to fear from the Qatari government, although their Qatari employers can fire them, which could result in deportation if they cannot find another job. Within those expatriate communities, the consequences for converts depend more on the cultural norms from the home country, than on the cultural practices of Qatar. For expatriates, conversion to Christianity is sometimes easier than in their home country, because family and relatives are often far away and social pressure is less stringent.

Clan oppression (Strong)

Tribalism still plays a huge role in Qatari society despite the arrival of modern technology (and modern architecture). There is a continuing influence and enforcement of age-old norms and values. This tribalism is clearly mixed with Islam and especially affects converts. As in the rest of the Middle East, religion is connected to family identity. Therefore, leaving Islam is interpreted as betraying one's family. In general, families put strong social pressure on converts to make them return to Islam, leave the region or to be silent about their new faith. In many cases, converts are alienated from their families as a result of their conversion.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

Qatar is an absolute monarchy, ruled by the Emir. While the government has created a welfare state with many financial benefits for Qatari nationals, it expects obedience in return and does not allow any opposition. The government makes it a priority to keep the country distinctly Islamic, especially due to the low number of nationals compared to the very high number of expatriates. Although expatriate Christians are relatively free to practice their faith, the government monitors all activities.

The country is well policed and the many expatriates in the country have to behave carefully as they can easily be expelled from the country.

Drivers of persecution

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

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

- **Extended family (Strong):** Although clearly mixed with the issue of family honor, strongly held Islamic convictions are a significant reason for family members to target those of their kinship that convert to Christianity. Conversion from Islam to Christianity is socially unacceptable in Qatar.
- **Government officials (Strong):** The government will act against any Christian who makes an attempt to discuss Christian faith with Muslims, since proselytizing is illegal and punishable under the law. No Christians have been officially prosecuted for proselytizing, but some have been expelled from the country without due process in recent years.
- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** Conservative Islamic preachers (such as late Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi) have millions of viewers, for example via Qatari-based Al-Jazeera. Although al-Qaradawi did not support Wahhabism, he was seen as an important intellectual voice for the Muslim Brotherhood and he stated very clearly that apostasy has to be punished with the death penalty.
- **Ethnic group leaders (Strong):** Family and tribal heads will make sure that Islam is respected within their tribe or extended family. They will influence family members to make them put pressure on converts to recant their faith.
- **Citizens (people from wider society) (Strong):** Conservative Islamic society is the biggest threat to Christians in Qatar. Employment contracts are such that employees are vulnerable to the

demands of their employers who can easily discriminate, humiliate or abuse expatriate Christians, especially the poor and low-skilled workers from Southeast Asia and North Africa. Expatriate Christians also face discrimination or mistreatment by their fellow Muslim expatriates in some cases.

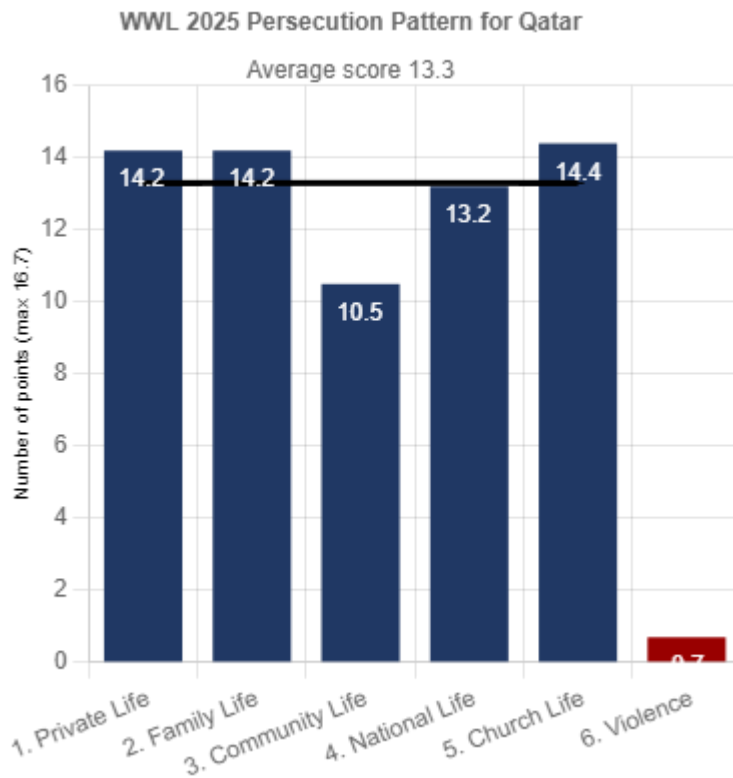
Drivers of Clan oppression

- **Extended family (Strong):** Although it is clear that the Islamic punishment for apostasy - capital punishment - is a key element among the reasons to persecute a convert family member, this cannot be viewed separately from the concept of 'family honor'. Age old norms (such as protecting family honor) are still intact and conversion from Islam to Christianity is the betrayal of everything a conservative Muslim family stands for and brings shame upon the name of the family. Converts face the risk of being ostracized by their families and might even be killed.
- **Ethnic group leaders (Strong):** Tribal and family heads will make sure that the honor of their group is not defiled by a member converting from Islam to Christianity. A conversion to Christianity brings real shame and preserving the honor and image of the family is paramount.
- **Government officials (Strong):** The government adds to the influence of *Clan oppression* by maintaining the status quo in society and the adherence to cultural practices. Thus, the authorities will not protect converts from their own family, but regard such cases as a 'family matter'.
- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** Local imams etc. will encourage their communities to uphold the cultural norms, which are intertwined with Islamic principles.
- **Citizens (people from wider society) (Medium):** One's social standing in society is very important for Qataris. Thus, there is significant social pressure to keep up societal norms in order not to bring shame upon the good name of the family.

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** The Qatari government does not allow any criticism of state affairs, including the management of religious affairs. The country is well policed, with the security forces monitoring all activities in the country. Expatriates speaking out against the government will most probably be deported.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2025 Persecution pattern for Qatar shows:

- The average pressure on Christians is at a very high level (13.3 points).
- Pressure is at an extreme level in *Church*, *Private* and *Family life*. This reflects the difficulties converts face to practice and share their faith among their own family members and the difficulties the churches face when trying to build new churches, for example, and the limitations they face which hinder evangelization among Muslims.
- The score for violence increased very slightly from 0.6 points in WWL 2024 to 0.7 points in WWL2025.

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)

Indigenous and foreign converts from Islam cannot openly practice their faith. Any hint that they may be Christians can have serious consequences, including physical harm, ostracization by their families, job loss or deportation (in the case of foreign converts).

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)

Converts from Islam to Christianity face the highest risk here: Faith-related posts on social media platforms can lead to discovery of their conversion. However, expatriate Christians must self-censor, being careful not to openly proselytize or criticize Islam via social media or emails etc.

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

Converts cannot wear any Christian symbol as it would likely lead to discovery of their faith. Expatriate Christians are also careful, since publicly displaying a cross can lead to negative remarks or other types of harassment, especially when working in a Qatari home (as a domestic worker, for example).

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)

Risks are highest for Qatari converts, while for non-Qatari converts it depends on the specific norms of their own community. Expatriate Christians can be accused of proselytism, which will lead to deportation.

Block 1 - Additional information

Foreign Christians from Western countries are generally highly skilled and have relatively more freedom to privately practice their faith, as long as they do not evangelize Muslims. Lower-skilled foreign Christian workers have to act carefully and their freedom in the *Private sphere* depends on the attitude and religion of fellow migrant workers who live in the same labor camps, where there is often hardly any privacy. In the case of domestic workers, who are mostly women, the level of risk also depends on the attitude of their employers.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (3.75 points)

This is especially true for converts from Islam to Christianity. As there is zero recognition of their new faith, their children cannot be exempted from Islamic education. Islamic instruction is compulsory for students born as Muslim within state schools and private schools; the provision of non-Islamic religious instruction within schools, even international schools is prohibited. Christian children can only receive Christian religious education within their churches.

Block 2.2: Registering the birth, wedding, death, etc. of Christians has been hindered or made impossible. (3.50 points)

There is no recognition of conversion, hence it is impossible for converts to have and register a Christian marriage, nor can their children be registered as Christians.

Block 2.5: Burials of Christians have been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites. (3.50 points)

Converts often have to hide their faith. In the unlikely case that the family is aware of their conversion, they will still probably be buried according to Islamic rites.

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (3.50 points)

In a society which has Islam deeply connected to all aspects of life, it is very difficult for converts to raise their children in a Christian way.

Block 2 - Additional information

All Qataris are considered to be Muslims by the authorities and wider society. For a Muslim family, it is a great disgrace when one of its members leaves Islam. Converts run the great risk of having to face honor-killing, physical violence or being ostracized, if their families or communities discover their faith. As a result, converts tend to keep their Christian faith secret for fear of gossip and betrayal. For expatriate Christians, it is difficult to live as a Christian and to raise a Christian family in an environment which is dominated by conservative Islamic culture.

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.). (3.50 points)

All forms of communication are monitored in Qatar, but individual Christians suspected of being involved in proselytism are highly likely to be specifically targeted for closer surveillance.

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

There is high pressure from the wider community on converts to recant their faith, while expatriate Christians occasionally experience pressure to convert to Islam. Some converts will have an outward

Islamic appearance in order to avoid discrimination, especially when working closely with Qataris (domestic workers, for example).

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.). (3.25 points)

This is especially true for converts from Islam to Christianity. Both Qatari and non-Qatari converts will face severe harassment, if their conversion is known. Expatriate Christians can also face harassment and discrimination, although this often depends on their ethnicity: Western expatriate Christians are far less likely to experience harassment than African expatriate Christians.

Block 3.5: Christians have been put under pressure to take part in non-Christian religious ceremonies or community events. (3.25 points)

All people in Qatar have to observe Ramadan in public, although certain places (like some shopping malls or restaurants) are exempted. Converts will have to observe all Islamic rites, out of fear of their conversion otherwise becoming known.

Block 3 - Additional information

Lower-skilled expatriate Christians can face harassment and discrimination at their workplace and in their community - converts definitely will, if their new faith is known. Discrimination in dealing with the authorities affects all Christians, although discrimination is often not primarily faith-related. Christian parents are allowed to teach religious education to their children at home, but non-Muslim religious education is prohibited in both public and private schools.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

Christian symbols cannot be publicly displayed. As reported by the [US State Department \(IRFR 2023 Qatar\)](#): The Mesaymeer Religious Complex provides official worship space for eight registered Christian denominations, but there are clear government instructions against any Christian crosses, steeples or statues being visible on the exterior of any of the church buildings.

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 legal system is based on Sharia law and conversion to a religion other than Islam is illegal. In addition, only freedom of worship is guaranteed in the Constitution (Art. 50). Qatar even explicitly made reservations regarding the freedom of religion in its accession document to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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

Criticizing the government or Islam is unacceptable in Qatar and will lead to deportation in the case of expatriate Christians. In a society that is steeped in Islam, Christians have to speak carefully when giving views from a Christian perspective.

Block 4.9: Christian civil society organizations or political parties have been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions. (4.00 points)

Any establishment of civil society organizations is in general very limited. There is no room for Christian civil society organizations to operate unless this is strictly done within the boundaries of the Religious Complex just outside Doha.

Block 4.12: Christians, churches or Christian organizations have been hindered in publicly displaying religious symbols. (4.00 points)

Christian symbols cannot be publicly displayed. As reported by the [US State Department \(IRFR 2023 Qatar\)](#): The Mesaymeer Religious Complex provides official worship space for eight registered Christian denominations, but there are clear government instructions against any Christian crosses, steeples or statues being visible on the exterior of any of the church buildings.

Block 4 - Additional information

Non-Muslims are subject to Sharia law in cases of child custody, but civil law covers other personal status cases, including those related to divorce and inheritance. Muslims have more rights than followers of other religions. Converts in particular face significant pressure in dealing with the authorities if their Christian faith is known. Expatriate Christians will face problems in this sphere of life if they are actively proselytizing Muslims. This can lead to imprisonment and deportation.

The government has funded a center for interfaith dialogue, which actively promotes religious tolerance. However, this does not seem to make any real difference for Christians in the country. During the month of Ramadan, the government actively promotes fasting and other religious duties, also for non-Muslims; any people seen eating or drinking during daylight hours can be arrested.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (4.00 points)

The Mesaymeer Religious Complex outside Doha has an airport-style security system and cannot be visited by non-Christians. All churches and church activities are monitored and it is difficult to organize any form of Christian activity beyond those held by congregations in the official complex or meeting in private villas. The high level of monitoring forces many Christians to apply self-censorship.

Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (4.00 points)

All church activities are strictly limited to the Religious Complex (or the respective congregations gathering in private villas). Basically, Christianity is kept out of public view. Christian books are not for sale outside the Religious Complex. Even if church members partake in a sports competition representing their church, they have to be careful not to have any Christian symbols visible on their T-shirts. Similarly, Christmas decorations cannot display any Christian religious symbols.

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

This is impossible as converts are not even allowed to enter the Religious Complex outside Doha, let alone be part of a Christian community.

Block 5.8: Christian preaching, teaching and/or published materials have been monitored. (4.00 points)

All Christian activities, including preaching, teaching and all church publications are being monitored. CCTV cameras are in place at the Religious Complex and also at private villas being used for church gatherings. No Christian materials can be brought into the country without permission from the government and written approval is needed before importing Bibles and other Christian books.

Block 5 - Additional information

Expatriate Christians can only gather for worship in private or designated places: There are eight registered and many unregistered churches in Qatar that serve the large group of foreign workers. Official church recognition is hard to obtain; any independent building or renting of space for Christian worship is not allowed. The officially recognized churches are concentrated in a district outside the capital, Doha. This brings the risk of ghettoization and monitoring, which usually happens under the authorities' pretext of ensuring protection. Reportedly, government security services protecting the churches also check for Muslims trying to visit church services.

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 5 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 WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

4. The symbol “x” in the table: This denotes a known number which is to remain unpublished due to possible security concerns.

Qatar: 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)?	x	x
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?	x	x
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	x	x
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?	x	x
6.5 How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	x	x
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	x	x
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	x	x
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	x	x
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?	x	x
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?	x	x

(table continues below)

Qatar: Violence scores per Block 6 question in questionnaire	WWL 2025	WWL 2024
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	x	x
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	x	x

Christians attacked in the WWL 2025 reporting period

It is widely known that housemaids working in the domestic sphere in Qatar are vulnerable to incidents of abuse. Additionally, Amnesty International reported in 2020 on the restrictions on freedom of movement and communication, humiliating treatment and forced labor suffered by domestic workers in Qatar ([AI, 20 October 2020](#)). However, statistics are scarce as almost all persons, organizations and states involved have no interest in revealing the true situation: Qatar needs the domestic staff to work in households, but has a shame culture and does not want a bad reputation. Also, the home countries of the housemaids need the money coming in from the thousands of migrants working in the Gulf states and do not want to put their economic interests at stake.

The employers of abused housemaids are either the perpetrators of the abuse themselves or have no real interest in their well-being. The housemaids themselves are often ashamed because of the abuse and do not want to be seen as being "dirty" in any way, whether in Qatar itself or by their family at home. In addition, many provide a very much needed source of income for their families in their home countries. The home families are proud of the work being done in Qatar, and the housemaid does not want to disappoint her family. Therefore, statistics and evidence of abuse are very difficult to provide.

It is also difficult to prove that any abuse is due to the housemaid being a non-Muslim. Nevertheless, given the high number of Christian expatriates in the country, conservative estimates agree that at least 10 Christian housemaids were abused in the WWL 2025 reporting period, with their faith being one of the factors making them more vulnerable.

5 Year trends

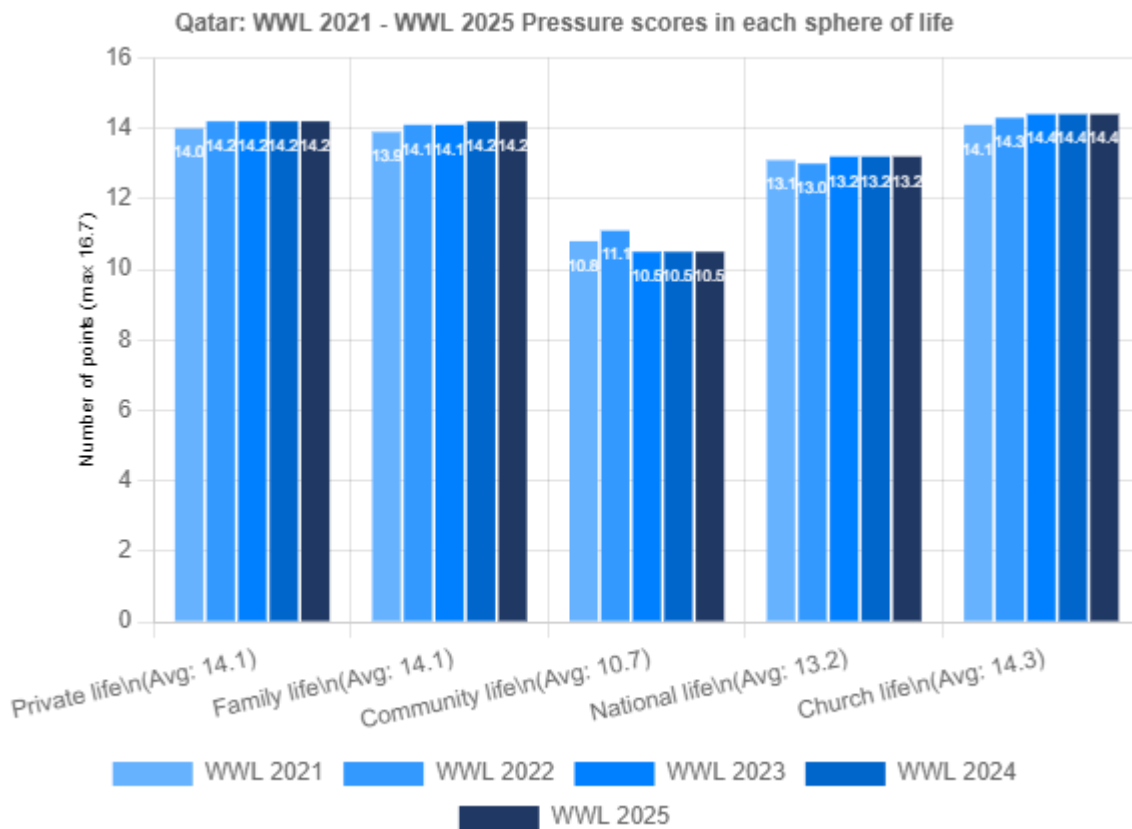
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

5 Year trends: Average pressure

Qatar: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	13.3
2024	13.3
2023	13.3
2022	13.3
2021	13.2

The average pressure on Christians has remained very high and has stabilized at the 13.3 point mark.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



Pressure in all *spheres of life* except *Community* and *National life* have stabilized at an extreme level.

5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



Qatar is a typical Gulf country in that very high levels of pressure ensure that almost nobody 'crosses the line'. As a result, the number of violent incidents recorded in Qatar does not usually change dramatically from year to year. However, WWL 2022 witnessed a dramatic increase in the violence score after many villa house-churches were not allowed to re-open after the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and were forced to cease activities. No new forced closures were reported in WWL 2023 - WWL 2025, which contributed to the score now dropping to a very low level.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Qatar	Female Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abduction Denied legal ability to marry Christian spouse Forced marriage Incarceration by family (house arrest) Travel bans/restrictions on movement Violence - death Violence - physical Violence - sexual

In general, women in Qatar face restrictions and limitations to their human rights, due to Sharia and the cultural Wahhabi interpretation of Islam. These same restrictions make Christian women particularly vulnerable to religious persecution. Generally, women are vulnerable to domestic vio-

lence, and Qatari women and girls are subject to guardianship by their male family members, where accepted cultural privacy standards dictate that: Whatever happens in the family home cannot be interfered with by the authorities ([HRW](#), 29 March 2021).

Within this context, it is especially difficult for female converts to Christianity. Conversion from Islam to another religion is forbidden, and those who do so must usually conceal their new religious beliefs. If their faith is discovered, they can face severe consequences. Their families have the authority to limit their travel, deny financial support, deny access to the Internet, phone and books and keep them under house-arrest. It is much easier to apply pressure like this on women and girls. Converts also risk facing sexual violence, or in the most extreme cases, honor-killings. Thus, those who convert tend to remain silent about their conversion.

Women from a Muslim background are legally restricted from marrying a non-Muslim. A country expert comments: “A Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian man who wants to remain a Christian. This makes it very difficult for Christianity to take root in Qatar outside of the expatriate population.” Additionally, female converts face the possibility of forced marriage to a religious person who is expected to humiliate her in order to convert her back to Islam; this person can restrict her freedom for a lifetime. In more extreme cases, she may even be married to one of the most religious uncles or nephews as his second wife, where she would then live a life essentially as a sex-slave deprived of any community or respect. If already married before they convert, women may face further pressures from their husband.

Housemaids working in Qatar can also face sexual harassment or slave-like treatment. The ill-treatment of migrant workers, including sexual abuse, has become a high-profile issue at the international level. Although not primarily faith-related, many Christian domestic migrant workers, almost all of whom are female, experience [serious abuses and exploitation](#), including physical, verbal and sexual violence (Amnesty International, 20 October 2020).

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Qatar	Male Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denied access to social community/networks Economic harassment via business/job/work access False charges Forced out of home – expulsion Imprisonment by government Violence - physical Violence - psychological

Besides the official restrictions on non-Islamic religious expression in Qatari society, Christians try to keep a low profile by self-censoring. Convert Christian men are particularly under pressure in the area of employment, since the loss of a man’s status and job will affect the whole family through loss of income, future prospects and social isolation.

Converts also risk domestic pressure; if discovered, families can threaten the removal of their wife and children. In the ‘best’ circumstances, the wives could agree to live with their husband on the condition that the children will not be informed of the faith of the husband. Such converts might be able to privately carry out acts of Christian worship, but they cannot then share their faith with their children. These combined restrictions mean that Qatari men are effectively isolated and find it very difficult to meet with other Christians or be taught and grow in their Christian faith. In the rarer, more extreme cases, men can face physical trauma for their faith.

Christian men can come under more frequent public scrutiny, since it is men who are visible in the public sphere and at the forefront of interaction with the authorities. Those in Christian leadership, who are typically male, are required to report details of church activities, further subjecting them to scrutiny. A country expert summarizes: “Pastors are closely monitored and need to be careful how they present themselves in public and what they approve and disapprove.”

Expatriate churches are also highly monitored. Known Muslims (whether nationals or non-nationals) are not permitted by the authorities in the officially sanctioned religious complex and a non-national would risk deportation. These are all issues which directly concern men primarily.

Persecution of other religious minorities

As reported by the [US State Department \(IRFR 2023 Qatar\)](#):

- The only registered religious groups are Sunni and Shia Muslims and eight Christian denominations (p.4).
- Although other religious communities such as the sizeable expatriate Hindu and Buddhist communities have no official recognition, their gatherings are generally tolerated and there are several unofficial Hindu temples in the country. However: "Members of the Hindu community stated ... they would like a formally recognized place of Hindu worship." (p.9).
- "During the year, representatives of the Baha’i Faith community reported they were experiencing increased government intimidation. A Baha’i community leader stated that several Baha’i foreign residents were denied security clearances or certificates of good conduct by the government when offered new jobs and indicated that they believed this was because of their religious beliefs. Another was fired from his job without notice. Many said they had to leave the country, with one Baha’i characterizing the government’s actions towards this group as “economic strangulation.” (p.14).
- According to the NGO Baha’i International Community (BIC): "Baha’is have lived in Qatar for almost a century – decades before the country gained independence in 1971. In recent decades the Baha’i community has suffered instances of discrimination, restrictions and human rights violations. The cumulative effect of these acts has now become untenable because they threaten the viability of the community." On top of the that, "the BIC and the Baha’i community had made several attempts to engage the government on issues of employment discrimination, non-renewal of work permits, expulsions and blacklisting, and cemeteries, but the situation had continued to deteriorate, despite government assurances." Furthermore, the BIC said: “The government is apparently attempting to eradicate the Baha’i community.” (pp. 7,8)

Trends Summary

1) Economy stimulated and alliances renewed after the Saudi-led blockade ended in January 2021

Despite the three year long boycott by Saudi Arabia and allied countries, the political, social and economic situation of Qatar remained stable - which was due to its [ample fiscal buffers](#) (Focus Economics, 3 November 2020). The boycott failed to make Qatar give in to Saudi Arabia's demands at the time. It seems that Qatar can retain its independent position, although it decreased its support for the Muslim Brotherhood to further restore ties with its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) neighbors and Egypt. During the WWL 2025 reporting period, Qatar maintained ties with Iran and improved them with Turkey, while both the UAE and Saudi-Arabia renewed talks with Iran and Turkey. It is likely that these relationships, with Qatar in the middle, will continue to improve and stimulate both Qatar's economy as well as its international standing.

2) Rapid modernization is a challenge to current cultural norms

A major challenge for the country is to maintain its cultural and religious standards amidst rapid modernization and development. In the run-up to the 2022 World Cup, Qatar and its deplorable treatment of migrant workers increasingly caught the world's attention. Under pressure from the West, Qatar implemented minor - according to human rights organizations: cosmetic - reforms in the labor conditions for migrant workers ([Amnesty International, 20 October 2022](#)). In spite of the pressure to improve human rights in Qatar, no major improvements are expected in the strict Islamic country which is known for its overall control of society. As such, no major changes in religious freedom for Christians are expected in the near future.

3) Strengthened ties with Iran and Turkey could affect Christians in the long-term

If the numbers of Qatari converts are indeed growing (even if slowly), this could lead to an increased number of incidents of persecution against converts occurring in the future. There is no other real reason for persecution to increase. However, the Saudi-led 'blockade' - imposed in part because of Qatar's perceived closeness to Iran - has ironically served to strengthen ties with Iran, which is renowned for its hardline stance against converts to Christianity. As long as Qatar remains in the sphere of influence of Islamist countries, it is unlikely that Qatar will seek to improve the level of freedom for religious minorities.

4) Increasing use of technology to control population

Qatar is increasingly using advanced technology to monitor both citizens and expatriates in the country. Although tracing technology was widely accepted for combating the spread of the COVID-19 virus, there is growing concern that the government will use similar techniques for further developing population surveillance. With civil and political freedoms already being severely limited, it is likely that the situation will only deteriorate. This has caused Christians in Qatar to become increasingly careful in their movements and gatherings.

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 violations of rights in the reporting period: Amnesty International - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde22/3175/2020/en/>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: earlier report - https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/qatar_my_sleep_is_my_break_final.pdf
- Specific examples of positive developments: US State Department's IRFR 2023 - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/qatar/>
- Specific examples of positive developments: ACWAY, accessed 28 July 2023 - <https://acway.org/global-youth-forum-qatar-2023/>
- Specific examples of positive developments: Gulf Times, 11 May 2023 - <https://www.gulf-times.com/article/660796/qatar/interfaith-dialogue-an-indispensable-mechanism-for-communication-between-societies-for-peace>
- Specific examples of positive developments: Asia News, 1 April 2019 - <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Inauguration-of-Church-funded-by-the-Emir-of-Qatar-45880.html>
- Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere: US State Department (IRFR 2023 Qatar) - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/qatar/>
- Block 4.12: Christians, churches or Christian organizations have been hindered in publicly displaying religious symbols. (4.00 points): US State Department (IRFR 2023 Qatar) - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/qatar/>
- Violence / Block 6 - commentary: AI, 20 October 2020 - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde22/3175/2020/en/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: HRW - <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/03/29/everything-i-have-do-tied-man/women-and-qatars-male-guardianship-rules>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: serious abuses and exploitation - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde22/3175/2020/en/>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: US State Department (IRFR 2023 Qatar) - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/qatar/>
- Trends Summary: ample fiscal buffers - <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/qatar>
- Trends Summary: Amnesty International, 20 October 2022 - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde22/6106/2022/en/>