

## Fact Sheet and Additional Information

**Embargoed until 10 January Wednesday 11:59pm (AEDT).**

### What are some key points from the 2018 World Watch List?

- North Korea has ranked No.1 for 17 consecutive years
- North Korea and Afghanistan are only separated by less than one point.
- [Interactive map available here](#) (updated to 2018 at time of embargo)
- [9 Christians were killed in Pakistan](#) in December at a Christmas celebration
- [47 Christians were killed in Egypt](#) as 2 churches were bombed at Easter
- 215 million Christians face high to extreme levels of persecution in countries scoring more than 41 points
- Ahok, the former governor of Jakarta, sentenced to [2 years in prison for blasphemy](#)
- Pakistan ranked No.5 but highest for violence
- Islamic Oppression is the most common cause of persecution of Christians and present in two thirds of countries on the list
- Radical Hindu extremism has been on the increase since Modi's BJP party was elected to power. Radical groups have a goal by the end of 2021 they will remove Christianity from India
- The Egyptian church, the largest in the Middle East, faces persistent violent attacks from Islamic extremists within the country. Islamic State has claimed Egypt to be their next target.
- Malaysia has increased by 5 points in the last year, with the whereabouts of pastor Raymond Koh still unknown after his abduction in broad daylight in February 2017
- All Central Asian states have seen an increase in scores as governments continue to tighten their control (mostly based around fear of religious extremism and returning fighters from the Middle East for Islamic State and other groups)

### Quotes from persecuted Christians

#### North Korea #1

"When he came to faith, he made a decision that one day he would die for Christ. Every Christian in North Korea has made that choice. My friend knew that one day he could get caught and on that day he had to be loyal to Jesus."

- North Korean Christian

#### Pakistan #5

"We [celebrate Easter] knowing that at any time a suicide bomber can come and disrupt our service, our worship, our praying. Then I think: Will it really be disrupted or will I be sent into the fullness of worship?"

- Mother of two who used to be Muslim, now celebrating Jesus at Easter

## Iraq #8

"We have always asked Christians to pray with us so that we will be freed from Daesh (Islamic State). What the worldwide church has prayed for has now become a reality. Now we ask you to pray for us as we are going to rebuild our lives here."

- Pastor, Bartella, Iraq

## Yemen #9

"As Christians we feel like strangers in our own country. The war has focused us on what really matters – following Christ – even if it costs us our lives. The Bible is very clear about what we can expect; suffering is part of life for those who follow Christ. This is why many Yemeni Christians really long for Jesus to return. We lost so much; we reach out to the everlasting peace that He will bring one day – hopefully soon!"

- Jamil\*, former Muslim (\*name changed for security purposes)

## Wording for social media

- "When he came to faith, he made a decision that one day he would die for Christ. Every Christian in North Korea has made that choice."
- Popular tourist destinations Vietnam, Indonesia and the Maldives have all been named in the top 50 countries where it's hardest to be a Christian.
- It's the major Human Rights abuse we hear almost nothing about and it's affecting 215 million people worldwide.

## How is the World Watch List Produced?

For the last 20 years, Open Doors has been producing the World Watch List, which ranks the top 50 countries where it's most dangerous to be a Christian.

Through on the ground interviews and data collection, it provides an accurate picture of the daily reality persecuted Christians face around the world. Open Doors estimates that in the top 50 countries alone, over 215 million believers face intimidation, prison, or even death. That is one in twelve Christians worldwide.

Each country is scored from a detailed report on violent incidents and different spheres of pressure on Christians. These scores are then added up to a total score out of 100 to create the ranking.

## Who can I speak to?

**James Kozina**, *National Church Manager*

**Tim Reid**, *Church Manager NSW*

**Mike Gore**, CEO of *Open Doors Australia* (after 15 Jan)

All interviews are available on request

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