



World Watch List Methodology

Main Document - Revised edition
November 2016

World Watch Research



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

November 2016

research@od.org

www.opendoorsanalytical.org

World Watch List Methodology

Main document (see separate document for appendices)

World Watch Research (WWR) – Open Doors International

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
WORLD WATCH LIST METHODOLOGY	6
1. Monitoring persecution	6
1.1 Definitions of ‘Christian’ and ‘persecution’	6
1.2 Complex reality: brokenness – impulses – persecution engines - drivers	7
1.3 ‘Squeeze’ and ‘smash’	13
1.4 Spheres of life and violence	14
1.5 Four variables characterizing the persecution situation.....	17
2. Tools for monitoring persecution	21
2.1 Monitoring hostilities against Christians worldwide.....	21
2.2 Rapid Appraisal Tool.....	22
2.3 Short questionnaire.....	22
2.4 World Watch Survey	23
2.5 Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT)	23
2.6 World Watch List Questionnaire	24
3. Creating results from the WWL questionnaires.....	25
3.1 The scoring grid	25
3.2 Sources of expertise in relation to the field stream questionnaires.....	31
4. Work Flow and Information Gathering Process.....	34
4.1 Preparation: defining determinants of persecution	34
4.2 Processing of the WWL questionnaire	35
4.3 Time frame for the WWL process	38

4.4 Learning-by-doing and peer group review	38
5. Analysis and communication of results.....	39
5.1 Persecution pattern.....	39
5.2 Listing of countries according to scores.....	40
5.3 Grouping of country scores	40
5.4 Ranking of countries.....	42
5.5 Country persecution dynamics.....	42
6. Process of evaluation and credibility rating.....	43
6.1 Credibility of WWL results at country level.....	43
6.2 Credibility of WWL results at the overall level.....	47
GLOSSARY.....	49
LIST OF APPENDICES (see separate document)	50

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the main tools Open Doors uses to track and measure the extent of persecution in the world is the World Watch List (WWL). Open Doors has been monitoring the worldwide persecution of Christians since the 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, the WWL methodology evolved gradually. In 2012, Open Doors' research unit, World Watch Research (WWR), comprehensively revised the methodology of the WWL in order to provide greater credibility, transparency, objectivity and scientific quality. In 2013 and 2016, further refinement of the methodology took place.

A persecution situation presents a complex reality. It is not always clear if and to what extent pressure felt by Christians or even violence against them is directly related to their Christian faith. Sometimes, just living in a chaotic world creates substantial amounts of suffering for Christians and others alike. At other times, suffering may result from antipathy or hatred towards Christians (or it could be that in a given situation Christians experience difficulties both as ordinary citizens and for their faith - sometimes referred to as 'double vulnerability') and will be called *persecution*. WWR therefore defines *persecution* as 'any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians'. This is what the WWL methodology tries to monitor and capture.

Persecution is when Christians and their communities experience pressure and/or violence that are specifically related to the persecution dynamics prevalent in their environments and which are forcing them to comply with the drivers of these dynamics. The WWL methodology groups these persecution dynamics into three different 'impulses'. These impulses fuel eight different persecution engines and are driven by specific actors or drivers of persecution. The eight persecution engines are *Islamic oppression*, *Religious nationalism*, *Ethnic antagonism*, *Denominational protectionism*, *Communist and post-Communist oppression*, *Secular intolerance*, *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Organized corruption and crime*.

World Watch Research distinguishes two main expressions of persecution: *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *smash* (violence). Nevertheless, while it might seem that *smash* is the most prevalent and invasive expression of persecution, it is often the *squeeze* that is most prevalent and invasive. Whereas *smash* can be measured and tracked through recording incidents of violence, *squeeze* needs a different form of documentation. It needs to be tracked by discerning how Christian life and witness is being put under pressure and squeezed in all different areas of life.

The WWL methodology has developed the 'five spheres concept' in order to track expressions of persecution (*squeeze* or pressure) in the following areas of life: private life, family life, community life, national life and church life. A sixth block highlights the *smash* (plain violence) experienced and potentially cuts through all five spheres of life. All six blocks have a set of questions that together form the body of the WWL questionnaire.

The WWL questionnaire is part of the system Open Doors uses for monitoring hostilities against Christians worldwide. The system begins with the Rapid Appraisal Tool (RAPT), which combines

information gathered from the internet and other sources. High scores on RAPT necessitate further research through the World Watch Survey or through the “short questionnaires” (a short version of the full WWL questionnaire). The Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) is an alternative to the World Watch Survey or short questionnaire. In-depth research is done through the World Watch List (WWL) questionnaire.

A scoring system has been developed so that the persecution situation in different countries can be compared and the World Watch List can be compiled. The WWL questionnaire has 84 questions, divided into six blocks. A scoring grid has been devised consisting of four categories of ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ for each question of blocks 1 to 5 (which measure the *squeeze*). The grid has four variable-answer elements concerning: i) the proportion of types of Christianity persecuted, ii) the proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution, iii) the intensity of persecution, and iv) the frequency of persecution. Block 6 - consisting of questions on violence - has a different scoring system.

The WWL questionnaire is a “field stream” questionnaire, filled out by Open Doors’ field staff. They gather information through a number of key contacts in the country who represent different networks. They may do that through sending their key contacts (parts of) the questionnaire, direct contact or other ways. This gives the data-gathering process its ‘grassroots’ character. The field stream questionnaire, together with input from several external experts who provide a cross-check for the results of the field stream questionnaire form the basis for the country scores. The persecution analysts of World Watch Research then put all the information together, giving feedback to the respondents and following-up their responses.

The detailed country scores of the six blocks of the WWL questionnaire converge into a specific pattern, the *country persecution pattern*. This persecution pattern consists of the following elements: the average score over blocks 1 to 5 (different *spheres of life*), deviance of the individual scores in the different *spheres of life* from the average score, and the level of violence experienced by Christians in the country. These elements are often characteristic for the persecution situation in the country.

As a result of the WWL process, each country can be given a specific final score. The final score can be the result of different persecution engines. For instance, one country may score highly due to *Islamic oppression* while another country has a comparable score due to *Dictatorial paranoia*. The WWL methodology enables comparisons to be made between different persecution situations since its starting-point is the pressure and violence Christians experience in their different spheres of life. Whether this pressure or violence originates from the same or different persecution engines is not relevant for the final scores, though it is for the country narrative.

The WWL ranks countries according to their final scores. The most important reason for ranking countries is to be able to present a complex reality to the broader public. For this to be done effectively, the WWL rankings must always be used together with the corresponding country persecution dynamics which explain the particularities of the persecution situation.

World Watch Research has also developed an internal system of credibility rating. The system rates the credibility of WWL results at country level and looks at the length of the information chain employed by Open Doors' field staff for gathering data, the number of cross-checks provided by external experts for each field stream questionnaire, and the level of completion of WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools delivered by Open Doors' field staff or external experts. It also rates the consistent application of WWL selection tools. Both elements result in a credibility rate for the WWL.

WORLD WATCH LIST METHODOLOGY

1. Monitoring persecution

One of the main tools used by Open Doors to track and measure the extent of persecution in the world is the World Watch List (WWL). World Watch Research (WWR), Open Doors' research department, has been monitoring the persecution of Christians worldwide since the 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, the WWL methodology evolved gradually. In 2012, the WWL methodology was comprehensively revised in order to provide greater credibility, transparency, objectivity and scientific quality. In 2013 and 2016, further refinement of the methodology took place.

The WWL is based on the comparison of expert opinions (Open Doors' field researchers, external experts, persecution analysts of WWR). However, before discussing the more technical details of measuring, scoring and analyzing persecution-related data from a multitude of countries, this section elaborates upon several basic tenets used in this approach. It deals with the definitions of 'Christian' and 'persecution' (1.1), the complex reality of persecution (1.2), 'squeeze' and 'smash' (1.3), spheres of life and violence (1.4), and the four variables characterizing the persecution situation (1.5).

1.1 Definitions of 'Christian' and 'persecution'

The WWL methodology has defined the terms 'Christian' and 'persecution (of Christians)' to clarify which people it monitors and what sort of situations or incidents involving those people it takes into consideration. This way, the methodology can fulfill its goal, which is to monitor the persecution of Christians and their communities.

The WWL methodology uses the following definitions:

Christian:

A Christian is 'anyone who self-identifies as a Christian and/or someone belonging to a Christian community as defined by the church's historic creeds'.

This definition is part theological and part sociological. It includes not only the Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant denominations which define themselves according to theological creeds, but all people who self-identify as Christians, including those who do not belong to any specific denomination. The WWL methodology opts for this broad definition, following other institutions that report on worldwide Christianity.

Persecution:

Persecution is 'any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians'.

Here the WWL methodology has opted for a theological rather than a sociological definition. While this definition has its challenges because of its inclusiveness, it seems best to cover the full range of hostility that is experienced by Christians as a result of their Christian walk, rather than limit the term 'persecution' to more overt forms of persecution or extreme forms of suffering. This is because it is very difficult in practice to state objectively what is, in fact, extreme. Often losing a job can be far worse in its effects than a beating in prison. Or being shunned by one's parents can be more psychologically scarring than being part of a skirmish on the street. Also, to say that persecution has to be deliberate underestimates the implicit and indirect power of culture which has over time created a society or situation that freezes Christians out of normal life.

The WWL methodology recognizes that hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians can also originate from within Christianity itself. For this reason one of the persecution engines defined and analyzed by the team of World Watch Research (WWR) is *Denominational protectionism*.

1.2 Complex reality: brokenness – impulses – persecution engines - drivers

A persecution situation presents a complex reality. It is not always clear if and to which extent pressure felt by Christians or even violence against them is directly related to them being Christian. Sometimes, just living in a chaotic world creates substantial amounts of suffering for Christians and others alike. Other times, suffering results from antipathy, hatred or it could simply be 'double vulnerability' of Christians in a problematic context, and will be called *persecution*. The latter is what the WWL methodology tries to monitor and capture.

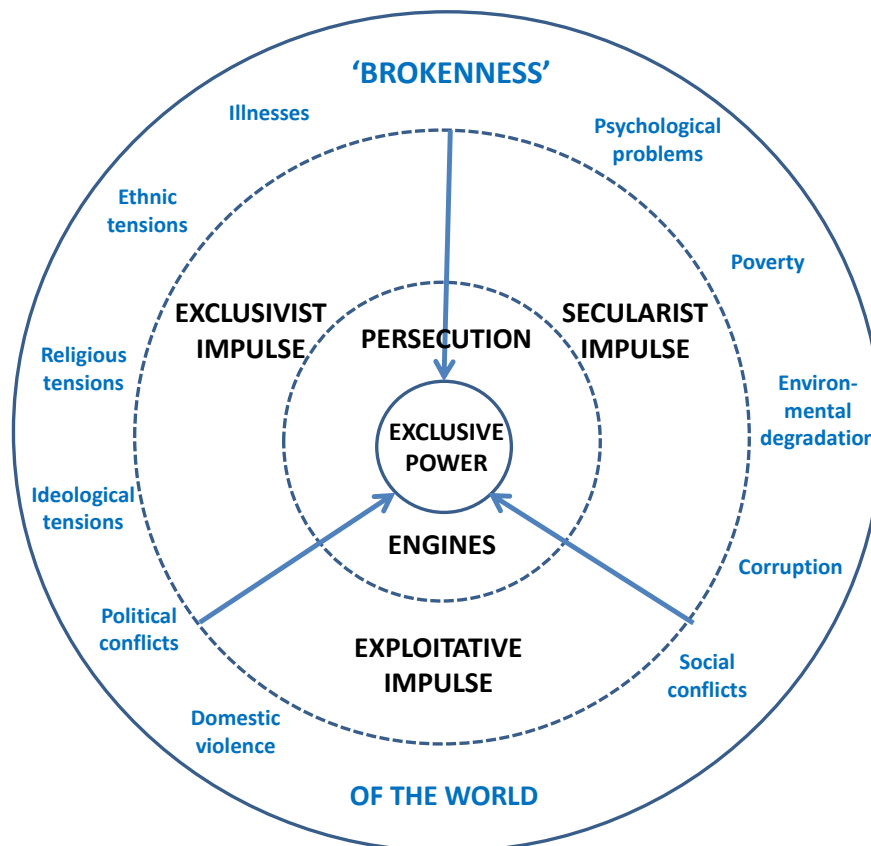
This section explains the overall picture of persecution (1.2.1), 'brokenness' of the world (1.2.2), elementary impulses as sources of persecution (1.2.3), persecution engines (1.2.4), drivers of persecution (1.2.5), and the drive for exclusive power (1.2.6).

1.2.1 Overall picture of persecution

The WWL methodology sees Christians and their communities living in a world that is often far from being perfect. To a greater or lesser extent, they live in problematic circumstances, as all other inhabitants of the same areas do. Although these issues can cause Christians to feel pressured or violated, the WWL methodology does not consider this persecution per se, but rather refers to it as the 'brokenness' of the world. 'Brokenness' is the background against which persecution situations evolve.

Persecution is when Christians and their communities experience specific pressure and/or violence in this situation of 'brokenness', forcing them to comply with the drivers of the persecution dynamics prevalent in their environment. The WWL methodology groups these dynamics into three different 'impulses'. These impulses fuel eight different persecution engines and are driven by specific actors or drivers of persecution. Diagram 1 shows the relation between impulses, persecution engines and a drive for exclusive power, against a background of 'brokenness'.

Diagram 1: 'Brokenness' of the world as the background scenario against which different elementary human impulses strive for power by employing a variety of persecution engines



Developed by World Watch Research

1.2.2 'Brokenness' of the world

The WWL methodology takes into account the 'brokenness' of the world insofar as it operates as a background to the persecution of Christians. Persecution often takes place in disturbed, difficult and de-stabilized contexts such as war, ethnic tensions, religious tensions, ideological tensions, political conflicts, social conflicts, corruption, environmental degradation and natural disasters, poverty, (severe) psychological problems, illness and domestic violence. This backdrop influences the resilience of Christians negatively when they are targeted by the drivers of one or more persecution engines.

This raises the question of the interaction between such background suffering ('brokenness' of the world) and suffering through active persecution engines. The question is if there is negative synergy between both. Research into this question is still in its early stages and is currently not integrated into the WWL questionnaire scoring system.

1.2.3 Elementary impulses as sources of persecution

Persecution is related to religions, ideologies or corrupted mind-sets, i.e. impulses. The WWL methodology considers these impulses as the 'power sources' of different persecution engines. There are three elementary impulses, which are all fueling specific persecution engines: the *exclusivist impulse*, *secularist impulse* and *exploitative impulse* (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2: The three elementary impulses and the specific persecution engines emanating from them

Elementary impulses	Persecution engine
Exclusivist impulse	Islamic oppression
	Religious nationalism
	Ethnic antagonism
	Denominational protectionism
Secularist impulse	Communist and post-Communist oppression
	Secular intolerance
Exploitative impulse	Dictatorial paranoia
	Organized corruption and crime

Exclusivist impulse

The *exclusivist impulse* has to do with very exclusive group formation. The ‘other’ who is not part of one’s own group, is considered to be an inferior human being or infidel. It is considered permissible to deal with such a person in bizarre, amoral ways that would never be allowed in one’s own group without compromising one’s own moral standards. The *exclusivist impulse* is always related to a strong religious presence.

The *exclusivist impulse* often develops a very strong emphasis on obtaining absolute, exclusive power to the detriment of ‘others’. The ‘others’ are forced to either bend or crack. The persecution engines directly related to the *exclusivist impulse* are *Islamic oppression*, *Religious nationalism* and *Ethnic antagonism*. The ‘others’ can also be Christians and/or churches who are socially and politically excluded, sometimes eliminated, by Christians and/or churches from another type of Christianity. If this happens, the dominating church is driving the persecution engine termed *Denominational protectionism*.

The main drivers of these persecution engines are social groups putting pressure on governments. Once the engines are fully developed, both government and society are involved but the emphasis is normally on society because personal religious commitment is essential for these persecution engines to function.

Secularist impulse

The *secularist impulse* relates to putting severe pressure on individuals or groups that do not adhere to the dominant ideology which is always anti-religious or skeptical of organized religion to some degree.

The ideologies inspiring the *secularist impulse* do not have to have the same emphasis; the main focus can vary from the ‘revolutionary potential of the working class’ to the launch of a very liberal sexual agenda. What counts is that humans or nature are the sole source of all norms and values, without divine inspiration or guidance.

Like the *exclusivist impulse*, the *secularist impulse* also often develops a very strong emphasis on obtaining absolute, exclusive power. This oppressive power can be very tangible or more

subtle. Nevertheless, the aim is the same. The main persecution engines related to the *secularist impulse* are *Communist and post-Communist oppression* and *Secular intolerance*.

The main drivers of these persecution engines are governments (*Communist and post-Communist oppression*) or social groups putting pressure on governments (*Secular intolerance*). Once the engines are fully developed, both government and society are involved. Nevertheless, the emphasis is normally on the government because state control is essential for these persecution engines to function.

Exploitative impulse

The *exploitative impulse* relates to plain greed: getting as many resources as possible for oneself and one’s small, favorite social environment, legally or illegally. Everything is allowed.

Power in the context of the *exploitative impulse* is more a means than a goal. While in the context of the *exclusivist* and *secularist impulses* power is actively sought to signify the supremacy of one’s religion or ideology, the *exploitative impulse* needs power to safeguard its interests. The *exploitative impulse* relates to two persecution engines: *Organized corruption and crime* and *Dictatorial paranoia*.

The main drivers of *Organized corruption and crime* operate in the shadow of those driving other persecution engines and/or manipulate them to achieve their own goals. One of its main mechanisms is to illegally co-opt government officials and social agents into their agenda. While government and society as such are not driving this persecution engine, co-opted elements within their ranks are essential to it.

For *Dictatorial paranoia* the situation is different. The main drivers of this persecution engine are government officials at any level from local to national.

1.2.4 Persecution engines

The persecution engines are elemental for scoring the WWL questionnaires, and for the analysis of the persecution of Christians and their communities. The WWL methodology has defined eight different persecution engines (Diagram 3).

Diagram 3: Persecution engines as defined by the WWL methodology

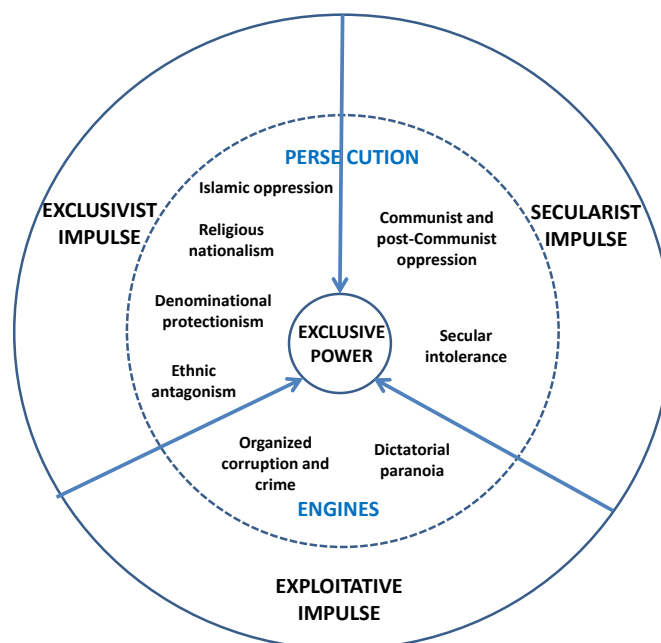
Persecution engine	Description
Islamic oppression	Tries to bring the country or the world under the 'House of Islam' through violent or non-violent actions.
Religious nationalism	Tries to conquer the nation for one’s religion. Mainly Hinduism and Buddhism, but also orthodox Judaism or other religions.
Ethnic antagonism	Tries to force the continuing influence of age-old norms and values shaped in ‘tribal’ context. Often comes in the form of traditional religion or something similar.

Denominational protectionism	Tries to maintain one’s Christian denomination as the only legitimate or dominant expression of Christianity in the country. In most cases this Christian denomination is the majority Christian denomination.
Communist and post-Communist oppression	Tries to maintain communism as a prescriptive ideology and/or controls the Church through a system of registration and oversight that has come from communism.
Secular intolerance	Tries to eradicate religion from the public domain, if possible even out of the hearts of people, and imposes an atheistic form of secularism as a new governing ideology.
Dictatorial paranoia	Does everything to maintain power, not specifically focused on realizing a vision.
Organized corruption and crime	Tries to create a climate of impunity, anarchy and corruption as a means for self-enrichment.

In many countries, more than one persecution engine is in operation. However, one specific persecution engine is generally more prevalent than others. Often this persecution engine creates a vacuum for other engines to flourish as well. A clear example is the advance of *Organized corruption and crime* driven by criminal groups in contexts where violent radical Islamic activity is prevalent. In such a case, there normally exists a high degree of impunity regarding violence against Christians: Islamist rulers will tolerate criminal groups trafficking Christian girls and women, as long as they get their share.

Diagram 4 further develops Diagram 1. It specifies the persecution engines that are instrumental for the different elementary human impulses to obtain exclusive power, to the detriment of Christians.

Diagram 4: The persecution engines act as vehicles for the different elementary human impulses to achieve exclusive, absolute power



Developed by World Watch Research

1.2.5 Drivers of persecution

The drivers of persecution engines are people and/or groups embodying the three main impulses. The WWL methodology studies who they are, and which ones are involved in hostilities against Christians in a particular country. The WWL methodology distinguishes 11 categories of drivers of persecution. One is related to government, the others are related to society.

Diagram 5: Eleven drivers of persecution, as defined by the WWL methodology

Drivers of persecution	
Government	Government officials at any level from local to national
Society	Ethnic group leaders
	Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national
	Religious leaders of other churches at any level from local to national
	Fanatical movements
	Normal citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
	Extended family
	Political parties at any level from local to national
	Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups
	Organized crime cartels or networks
	Multilateral organizations

Often more than one driver is active in and around one or more persecution engines.

Even though the drivers of persecution cannot always be clearly distinguished, WWR considers the above categories clear enough for making good analysis possible. Especially the fact that the broad category ‘society’ is divided up into 10 distinctive sub-categories, is considered by WWR to be of particular value to the methodology.

1.2.6 Drive for exclusive power

The impulses and the related persecution engines all aim towards the accumulation of absolute, exclusive power in society and in politics. By doing so, they crush everything in their way (including Christians and their communities) which does not align itself with those powerful societal dynamics.

The WWL methodology affirms that neither the eight persecution engines nor their interplay are necessarily explicitly directed against Christians and/or churches. One possible scenario is that the drivers of these engines completely focus on their quest for power and what they can achieve with it. The best way for people who do not readily buy-in into this quest to survive is to be pliable enough so as not to draw (negative) attention to themselves. However, Christianity in its very essence teaches that exclusive power does not belong to earthly forces. This is what

Christianity emanates, whether on the streets, in the pulpits or maybe only in the houses, and this is what often makes Christianity draw the ire of the drivers of persecution.

Therefore, even when drivers of persecution do not have an explicit anti-Christian agenda but are simply pushing for exclusive power, hostilities against Christians can be classified as *persecution*. Similarly, radical religious, ideological and corruption-related expressions of the quest for (exclusive) power that cause harm to Christians and churches can be called and analyzed as *persecution engines* even when they do not base themselves on an anti-Christian manifesto.

All this said, WWR recognizes that in many cases of hostilities against Christians an anti-Christian agenda or manifesto does exist. This agenda is deliberately amplified by the propaganda machine of the drivers of persecution.

1.3 'Squeeze' and 'smash'

World Watch Research distinguishes two main expressions of persecution: *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *smash* (violence). Nevertheless, while it might seem that *smash* is the most prevalent and invasive expression of persecution, it is often the *squeeze* that is most prevalent and invasive. The WWL methodology, therefore, negates the idea that *the more violence there is against Christians, the more persecution there must be*, but states that less violence can go together with (very) high levels of persecution.

An example of a very high level of *squeeze* is the situation of Christians on the Maldives. From every side, they are facing massive pressure from friends, neighbors, family, and the government, which means they can hardly express their faith at all. Due to the enormous amount of pressure and control, Christians are virtually unable to express their faith in any way. Christians feel that they and their faith are being squeezed out of existence by their persecutors. However, if someone were looking for a list of incidents where Christians were beaten, put in jail or deported, there would be very few.

In other words, the degree of persecution can be so intense, and so all-pervasive, it actually results in fewer incidents of persecution, since Christians hide their faith and acts of public witness and defiance are so rare. So while there is no evidence of 'smashing' the church through violence and arrests, the *squeeze* is what is killing the church. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that many persecutors prefer to *squeeze* the church, rather than *smash* it, in the belief that it is a more successful form of persecution.

The WWL methodology also seeks to negate another assumption, which is that *the most violent persecutors of the church are its main persecutors*. An example of this is the situation of Christians in Northern Nigeria. One of their most violent persecutors in recent years has been the Islamic militant group, Boko Haram that has bombed churches and killed numerous pastors and other Christians. It is an unobvious attempt to *smash* the church. But in fact, for most Christians the greatest threat comes from a creeping cultural Islamization. This has been

stealthily progressing since the 1980's and now Christians suddenly realize they are second-class citizens in a once hospitable but now hostile culture.

While *smash* can be measured and tracked through incidents of violence, *squeeze* needs to be documented differently. It needs to be tracked by discerning how Christian life and witness itself is being squeezed in all the different areas of life.

1.4 Spheres of life and violence

The WWL methodology has defined the 'five spheres concept' to track the expressions of persecution in different areas of life. These five spheres express the *squeeze* (pressure) in each sphere of life. A sixth building block expresses the *smash* (violence). The sixth block potentially cuts across all five spheres of life.

Private life

Private life is defined as the inner life of a Christian, the *forum internum*, the freedom of thought and conscience.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: "How free has a Christian been to relate to God one-on-one in his/her own space?" This is not limited to the private home but can also apply to prison, for example, or a walk in the woods. This is irrespective of who the agent challenging this freedom might be.

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with conversion, private worship, possession of religious material, freedom of expression, e.g. in spoken word and writing, through images and symbols, access to information and media, privately sharing a belief with others, freedom of private assembly, and isolation of Christians.

Family life

Family life is defined as pertaining to the nuclear and extended family of a Christian.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: "How free has a Christian been to live his/her Christian convictions within the circle of the family, and how free have Christian families been to conduct their family life in a Christian way?" It also asks: "How much have Christians been discriminated against, harassed or in any other way persecuted by their own families?"

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the forced allocation of religious identity, registration of civil affairs, weddings, baptisms, burials, adoptions, child rearing, indoctrination of children, harassment of or discrimination against children, separation of families, pressure to divorce, custody of children, and inheritance rights.

Community life

Community life is defined as the interaction of Christians with their respective local communities beyond the family level and below any supra-local level. This community life includes the workplace, business, health care, education, and local public life and civic order. A mobile person

can have several local communities regarding different aspects of community life, e.g. origin or residence in one place and education or work in another.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: “How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live their Christian convictions within the local community (beyond church life), and how much pressure has the community put on Christians by acts of discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?”

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with threat or obstruction to daily life, dress codes, monitoring of Christians, abduction and forced marriage, access to community resources, community ceremonies, participation in communal institutions and forums, pressure to renounce faith, access to health care, access to and disadvantages in education, discrimination in employment and obstruction in business, and policing issues (fines, interrogations, forced reporting).

National life

National life is defined as the interaction between Christians and the nation they live in. This includes rights and laws, the justice system, national public administration and public life.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: “How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live their Christian convictions beyond their local community, and how much pressure has the legal system put on Christians, and how much pressure have agents of supra-local national life put on Christians by acts of misinformation, discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?”

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the Constitution, registration of religion in IDs, conscientious objection, travel within a country and abroad, discrimination by authorities, barring from public office or professional progress, policy interference with businesses, expression of opinion in public, Christian civil society organizations and political parties, media reporting, smear campaigns, religious symbols, blasphemy accusations, impunity, equal treatment in court, monitoring of trials.

Church life

Church life is defined as the collective exercise by Christians of freedom of thought and conscience, particularly as regards uniting with fellow Christians in worship, service and public expression of their faith without undue interference. It also pertains to properties held or used by Christians for these purposes.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: “How have restrictions, discrimination, harassment or other forms of persecution infringed upon these rights and this collective life of Christian churches, organizations and institutions?”

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the monitoring or hindrance in gathering of Christians, registration of churches, church building and renovation, expropriation and non-return, prevention of activities inside or outside churches or among youth, acceptance of

converts, monitoring of preaching and published materials, election and training of leaders, harassment of leaders or their families, Bibles and other religious materials and their printing, importing, selling or dissemination, and confiscation, broadcasting and Internet use, interference with ethical convictions (regarding family and marriage) and personnel policy of Christian institutions, Christian civil society organizations and social activities, interaction with the global Church, and the denouncing of persecution by government or social actors.

Violence

Violence is defined as the deprivation of physical freedom or as serious bodily or mental harm to Christians or serious damage to their property.

The guiding WWL question asked here is: “How many cases of such violence have there been?”

The questions in the WWL questionnaire deal with the killing of Christians, attacks on communal Christian buildings, detention without trial, jailing, abduction, rape and sexual harassment, forced marriage, other physical or mental harm, attacks on the homes and businesses of Christians, and eviction and flight.

Diagram 6 shows the relationship between the five spheres of life and the violence. The four spheres of life relating to Christians as individuals are seen as ever widening circles. Persecution can be experienced by Christians in their direct, intimate social environment or in the public domain which is less intimate, or in both. It depends on the type of persecution involved and how the persecution engine has developed. The church sphere of life is different to the other spheres. It does not look at the persecution of Christians within the church sphere of life but at the persecution of church communities. Violence is cross-cutting all spheres of life.

Diagram 6: Four spheres of life relating to Christians as individuals, the church sphere of life looking at church communities, and violence as a cross-cutting phenomenon

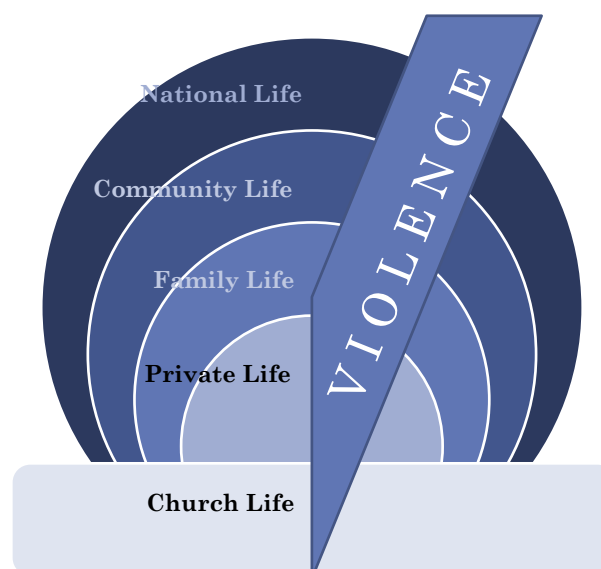


Image by courtesy of Christof Sauer, IIRF

The WWL methodology also encourages the provision of background information. In a special block of the WWL questionnaire, respondents are given the opportunity to describe general trends relating to the persecution engines, their drivers, evolution of the church, and expectations for the future. The contents of this block are used for the interpretative narrative that accompanies each WWL country score.

1.5 Four variables characterizing the persecution situation

The WWL methodology has defined four variables that are important to understand the spread and degree of persecution in the country: proportion of types of Christianity persecuted (1.5.1), proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution (1.5.2), intensity of persecution (1.5.3), and frequency of persecution (1.5.4).

This section describes the content of the four variables. Section 3.1 describes the numerical values attributed to these variables.

1.5.1 Proportion of types of Christianity persecuted

The WWL methodology distinguishes different categories or types of Christianity. These types of Christianity can all be present in a country or only some of them. Meanwhile persecution can focus on all types present or only on part of them. To be able to tackle this issue, the WWL methodology uses the proportion of the types of Christianity persecuted as a variable for scoring the WWL questionnaire.

The questionnaire distinguishes four types of Christianity:

- *Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians*

This category applies to a situation in which foreign Christian residents (expatriates or migrant workers) are allowed to a certain degree to rent or own church buildings or at least conduct church services, but who are not allowed to have contact with nationals regarding Christianity. Moreover, nationals are not allowed to assist in their services. So, the expatriate or migrant church community is often a radically isolated body in the country.

Saudi Arabia is a typical example. In countries like Saudi Arabia, expatriates or migrant workers can often be divided in two major subcategories: highly educated and skilled laborers working in oil and related industries and poorly educated non-skilled workers, such as house workers. In such contexts, expatriate or migrant Christian communities, though tolerated, face serious restrictions.

- *Historical Christian communities*

This category concerns the typical historical churches, such as Catholics, Orthodox and traditional Protestants, which have often been part of a country's history for hundreds of years. In many cases, they have been holding an official church registration for years. Their situation and degree of freedom differ from country to country. In some countries their presence is nearly eradicated, in others they have a great degree of freedom to operate, while in several other

countries they have been functioning in a state of second-class citizenship (*dhimmitude*). In persecution contexts they are often less persecuted than the third and fourth types of Christianity.

A parallel phenomenon in this category is formed by the so-called government controlled churches, such as the Three Self Church in China. They have an official registration but because they are government controlled, their status is different than the historical churches mentioned in this category.

- *Communities of converts to Christianity*

This category considers people who once belonged to a dominating religion or ideology, traditional religion, organized crime or other strong identifier and who changed identity in order to become Christian. ‘Cross-denominational converts’ can be part of this category, meaning that someone changed from one type of Christianity – often the majority type – to another.

Converts may be absorbed by one of the other types of Christianity (second or fourth type) but often gather in ‘house’ churches or ‘underground’ churches. When the latter is the case, it shows converts are afraid to be openly recognized as Christians and therefore are forced to go underground.

- *Non-traditional Protestant Christian communities (such as Evangelicals, Baptists, Pentecostals) and/or other Christian communities not included in the above three groups*

The category deals mainly with the great variety of new Protestant expressions, including the independent churches in many countries. Some of them might be disputed by other Christians in terms of having a serious lack of theological orthodoxy but as long as they self-identify as Christians (see definition of Christian) they are included in this category.

In general, the Christian communities included in this category are often active in reaching out to their communities. This makes them prone to serious hostilities in countries where the context for Christianity is suppressive. Because of this, these Christians are sometimes also forced to gather in ‘house’ churches or ‘underground’ churches.

As stated above, the WWL methodology uses the proportion of the types of Christianity persecuted as a variable for scoring the WWL questionnaire, and not the proportion of all Christians. This is because a vulnerable and very small Christian community can easily be subjected to very intense persecution. Or stated the other way around: A Christian community such as an ‘underground’ group of Christians with a Muslim background (Muslim Background Believers, MBB) could also be very small due to the fact that they suffer very intense persecution. Using this variable makes it possible, for instance, to describe situations in countries with both an MBB population that is heavily restricted and a broader Christian population that enjoys relative freedom.

WWL uses the four categories stated above as the main types of Christianity. It would be possible to distinguish more categories. By using the proportion of types of Christianity persecuted as a variable it will always be possible to fit more categories into the way the WWL questionnaire is scored.

1.5.2 Proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution

The WWL methodology covers the persecution of Christians in nation-states, but within the borders of a state there may be different communities of Christians who experience sharply contrasting amounts of persecution. The methodology needs to take this into account.

The decision taken in the WWL methodology is to score only nation-states, as it would be arbitrary to include only some parts of countries or federal states. However, to account for regional differences within a country, the WWL approach to scoring the questionnaire makes it possible to indicate which proportion of the inhabited territory of the country is affected by persecution.

The proportion of inhabited *territory* was chosen instead of the proportion of the population. Although the inhabited territory and the distribution of the population often overlap, it is easier to identify which parts of a country are affected by a particular dynamic, than to accurately determine which proportion of the population is affected by it.

Countries are not always homogeneously affected by persecution. Persecution can be much worse in some parts of a country than another. The scoring of the proportion of inhabited territory therefore makes it possible to state whether Christians are affected everywhere in a given country or whether there are certain areas where they are more affected. For example, the use of this variable helps to clarify whether a particular situation affects only parts of the country, as is the case in Kenya or Uganda. It makes it possible to take the specific situation in those affected regions into account, without giving it too much weight or downplaying it.

To take account of the fact that a country may contain large uninhabited spaces, deserts or mountain areas on the one hand, and small densely populated areas on the other hand, this variable considers the affected proportion of the *inhabited* territory of the country.

Meanwhile the prevalence of serious hostilities in, for instance, a vast area containing only a small part of the population, is important because it can have a 'ripple effect' within the whole country. This was seen in Mali, when Islamists took over more than half of the country where only a small part of the population had been living.

The WWL methodology for scoring nation-states does provoke two problems. First, countries are very different in size. The WWL compares the score of very big countries like China, India or Indonesia with much smaller countries like the Maldives and Comoros. In practice, this could mean that serious hostilities/pressure against Christians in parts of India are somehow averaged out over the whole territory of India and hence get less weight per unit area than comparable hostilities in a much smaller country like the Maldives.

Secondly, the particularities of countries within federations will not be included on the list as separate countries but included in the federal state. For instance, Chechnya, as part of the Russian Federation, could make it on the WWL but does not in the light of this aspect of the methodology.

The WWL methodology cannot solve these problems. The country persecution dynamics, however, which accompany the published WWL each year, provide space for explanation and differentiation. Additionally, these countries could be highlighted in other reports or specific lists about ‘regional hotspots’, or in supplemental studies of the ‘mega-countries’ every few years.

1.5.3 Intensity of persecution

The *intensity* of persecution is another variable characteristic to the persecution situation in a country. For every question investigated in the WWL questionnaire the intensity can vary between *low* and *very high*.

Intensity is a measure of concentration/vehemence; it is the degree or extent to which something is intense. In the WWL methodology it is related to the way the drivers of persecution implement persecution and to the consequences of this implementation (i.e. the level of pressure imposed or the magnitude of persecution). Or to put it simply, intensity is the degree of persecution (or level of pressure) caused by a driver of persecution. This is not about how people feel: *Intensity* is not measured by a persecuted Christian’s subjective perception, but is rather an objective assessment from the viewpoint of the person filling out the questionnaire. It is important to look at this *intensity* factor for each question separately.

For example, there is a case in which the burial of Christians is hindered. The intensity of this hindrance can be ‘low’, meaning that it takes some negotiation to get access to the village cemetery. It can also be ‘very high’ meaning that Christians are obliged to transport their deceased even outside the region, and bury them there.

Intensity is about the strength of persecution (pressure) being measured. There is the danger of confusion at this point: The scores given are not to be mistaken as being a measurement of frequency.

1.5.4 Frequency of persecution

The *frequency* of persecution is the last variable that characterizes persecution in a country. For every question investigated in the WWL questionnaire, the frequency can vary between *sporadic* and *permanent*.

Frequency is to be understood as the rate at which incidents of persecution happen and is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as: “The rate at which something occurs over a particular period of time or in a given sample.” In the WWL methodology, it is about looking at how often persecution occurs in a given country. In effect, the point of interest is in finding out to what extent a particular form of persecution is a rare or common occurrence. In other words, it is about trying to gauge the *frequency* of the occurrence in the territory over a period of time.

For example, in the case of hindrance of the burial of Christians, it may only occur now and then in a few villages. But in most other villages of the region, there is perhaps no problem at all. The *frequency* level is therefore ‘sporadic’. However, this phenomenon could also be occurring very often in many villages. It is then to be assessed as ‘frequent’ or even ‘permanent’.

If country ‘X’ prohibits wearing Christian symbols or importing Christian materials from abroad only during the month of Ramadan, the *frequency* can be categorized as ‘sporadic’ because it happens only during one month out of twelve.

2. Tools for monitoring persecution

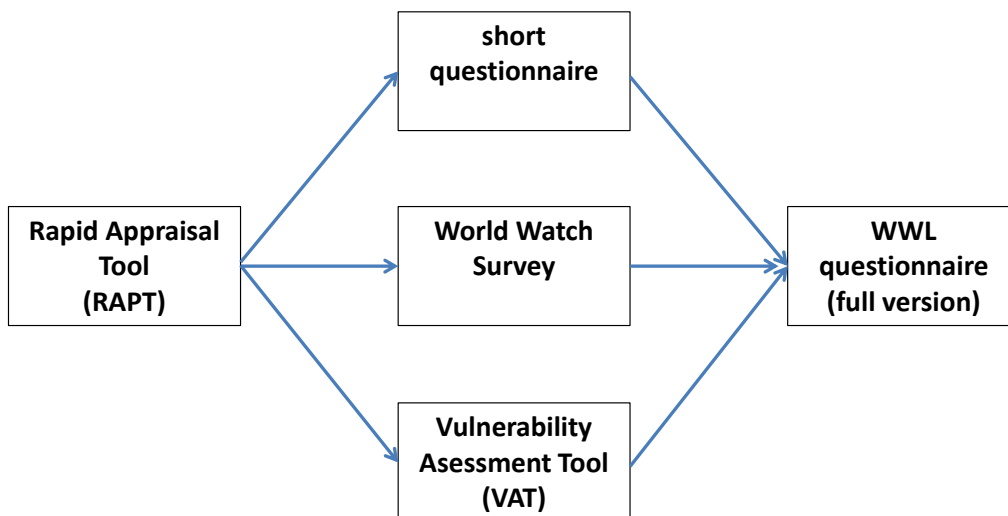
WWR has developed a three step approach for monitoring hostilities against Christians worldwide (2.1). The first component of the system is the Rapid Appraisal Tool (RAPT) which combines information gathered from the internet and other sources (2.2). High scores on RAPT necessitate further research using the short questionnaires (2.3), the World Watch Survey (2.4), or the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) (2.5). If the need for further in-depth research becomes clear, the WWL questionnaire (full version) is used (2.6).

2.1 Monitoring hostilities against Christians worldwide

The world has many countries and it would be very laborious to investigate all countries using the extensive WWL questionnaire. In order to know which countries to include in in-depth investigations, the WWL methodology has developed a three step approach for monitoring hostilities against Christians in all countries of the world.

Diagram 7 shows the three steps. If RAPT surpasses a specified threshold, it is followed by the short questionnaire, World Watch Survey or Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) being used. If the results from one of these follow-up tools confirm the need for in-depth investigation, the WWL questionnaire is used for that country.

Diagram 7: Three step system for integral monitoring of hostilities against Christians worldwide



Developed by World Watch Research

2.2 Rapid Appraisal Tool

The Rapid Appraisal Tool (RAPT), developed by WWR, is a simple instrument to get a quick idea of the situation in almost all countries of the world and provides justification for the non-inclusion of countries in the World Watch List. RAPT combines information from sources like Freedom House, Pew Forum and the US State Department (international think-tanks and academic research institutes) with the results of internet searches on violent incidents by WWR (Diagram 8).

Diagram 8: The format of the Rapid Appraisal Tool (RAPT)

A. Macro analysis: country in general						
1. Freedom House	2. Government Restrictions Index	3. Social Hostilities Index	4. Country of Particular Concern	5. Press Freedom Index	6. Corruption Perception Index	7. Failed States Index
B1. Macro analysis: country in general B2. Micro analysis: specific region within the country						
8. Destabilization factors	9. Killings	10. Destroyed churches and/or other Christian buildings	11. Physical or mental harm to Christians	12. Reported number of violent incidents		

Developed by World Watch Research

RAPT is meant for whole countries (B1) but has a provision for specific regions within countries (B2). Appendix 1A shows the RAPT methodology in detail. Appendix 1B presents the values of the Rapid Appraisal Tool currently used.¹

The countries scoring highest on the RAPT are the ones that warrant further investigation. Currently, WWR applies a threshold value of 35 per cent above which further investigation needs to be done. This value is considered to be a reasonable ‘warning sign’ for a context that may lead to persecution of Christians.

In very evident cases, the WWL questionnaire can also directly follow the RAPT exercise, or be applied directly without RAPT. Mali (WWL 2013) and Central African Republic (WWL 2014) are examples of this where there was a sudden and serious persecution situation involving the persecution engine *Islamic oppression*.

2.3 Short questionnaire

The next step for further investigation is the ‘short questionnaire’. These short questionnaires used for the WWL 2017 exercise, are derived from the results of the full versions of the WWL 2014, WWL 2015 and WWL 2016 questionnaires by statistical analysis. The idea was to make a selection of the questions per block that predicts the results per block with 95% confidence.

¹ This is the RAPT version as updated in December 2014. An earlier version of RAPT was used for the WWL 2015. The December 2014 version was used for work on the WWL 2016 and WWL 2017.

Although the results of the short questionnaires are not as solid as the results of the full version, they are useful. The short questionnaires make it possible to get a reasonable idea about the situation in countries where Field (Open Doors' network in the countries under investigation) has not yet established a network. The short questionnaires can also help to cross-check field stream questionnaires (full questionnaires returned by Open Doors' field staff), in case external experts do not have the possibility to work on full version questionnaires, or the WWR team judges it best to collect multiple short questionnaires from different external experts instead of a limited number of full version questionnaires.

Appendix 2A shows the Word version of the short questionnaire used for WWL 2017. As with the full version of the WWL questionnaire, there is a Word version and an Excel version (Appendix 2B). WWR prefers respondents to use the Excel versions.

2.4 World Watch Survey

The World Watch Survey is an alternative option for further investigation after RAPT. The World Watch Survey is strongly related to the WWL questionnaire. It uses the same structure but a limited number of open questions relating to the different spheres of life and the prevalence of violent incidents. This way all blocks of the WWL questionnaire are covered, while the background questions (block 7) are also partly maintained.

The external experts write a short analysis as an answer to each question. If needed, the WWR persecution analysts contact them to fine-tune the written information.

Appendix 3 contains the World Watch Survey. WWR might also use adapted forms of this survey, depending on the situation and external expertise available.

The World Watch Survey can also be used for an external expert cross-check of the results of field stream questionnaires.

2.5 Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT)

The Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) is another alternative for further investigation after RAPT. While the short questionnaire and World Watch Survey are well positioned to capture data on hostilities against Christians in more stable situations, VAT is a better solution for more volatile situations where there is the risk of *persecution eclipse*.² VAT puts the vulnerability of Christians in the country under scrutiny.

In a country with a more volatile situation all people can be expected to suffer. However, WWR's task is to get a picture of the specific threats or risks for which Christians are particularly vulnerable. In other words, answers are sought for the following questions: "To what extent are Christians suffering disproportionately in the country? Are Christians deliberately targeted in the midst of chaos?"

² *Persecution eclipse* means that the public awareness of a particular form of persecution is made minimal through the concurrent existence of political, social, economic, ethnic and/or other conflicts. The term was introduced by a Nigerian researcher writing on behalf of WWR about the religious problems in Northern Nigeria. Download here: <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/research/2576904>.

In order to get answers to these questions, WWR collects information from various experts, asking each one of them to list and comment on all threats in each category for which they consider Christians are vulnerable (Diagram 9). By way of illustration, this could be a natural disaster, such as the 2010 floods in Pakistan threatening the entire population. However, when it came to emergency aid, Christians were discriminated against and were kept from receiving this aid. In this situation, the flood put all people at risk but Christians suffered an added vulnerability because as second-class citizens (*dhimmitude*), they did not receive the help they needed to survive.

The table in Diagram 9 presents an outline of VAT. Appendix 4 shows the complete VAT. There are no limits to the number of threats in any category as the only criterion is that they are effectively threatening human dignity.

Diagram 9: Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT)

	To which threats are Christians vulnerable?
ENVIRONMENTAL: Environmental security: resource depletion; vulnerability to pollution and environmental degradation	1.
	2.
	3.
ECONOMIC: Economic security: poverty; vulnerability to global economic change	1.
	2.
	3.
POLITICAL: Political security: political repression; vulnerability to conflicts and warfare	1.
	2.
	3.
PERSONAL: Personal security: violence; vulnerability to conflicts, natural hazards, and "creeping" disasters	1.
	2.
	3.
FOOD: Food security: hunger and famine; vulnerability to extreme climate events and agricultural changes	1.
	2.
	3.
HEALTH: Health security: injury and disease; vulnerability to disease and infection	1.
	2.
	3.

Developed by World Watch Research

2.6 World Watch List Questionnaire

The WWL questionnaire consists of 84 questions, divided over 6 blocks with options for scoring and comments for each question. A seventh block has 10 open questions that are not scored but meant for additional information (Diagram 10).

The Word version of the WWL questionnaire can be found in Appendix 5A. Appendix 5B contains the Excel version.³

Diagram 10: The structure of the WWL questionnaire

Block 1: Private Life (10 questions)
Block 2: Family Life (13 questions)
Block 3: Community Life (13 questions)
Block 4: National Life (16 questions)
Block 5: Church Life (20 questions)
Block 6: Violence (12 questions) covers many forms of violence
Block 7 presents additional questions that are not scored but provide background information.

Developed by World Watch Research

Blocks 1 to 5 represent the different spheres of life – from private through family, community and national life to church life. These blocks cover pressure on Christians (*squeeze*) in the different spheres of life. Block 6 accounts for forms of violence (*smash*).

Though each of the blocks 1 to 6 has a different number of questions, all count the same (i.e. the maximum score for each block is 16.667). (See Section 3.1.5.) Analysis of the answers is done per block. The results give the possibility to do additional analysis for other combinations of questions.

Block 7 presents additional questions that are not scored but allow respondents to provide background information on general trends relating to the country, the Church in the country, and expectations for the future.

3. Creating results from the WWL questionnaires

As has been mentioned before, the WWL questions to be scored in the questionnaire are divided into 6 blocks. Each question of blocks 1-5 has 4 variable answer elements (VAE), while each VAE has a scale of 4 points, resulting in a 4x4 scoring grid. In this chapter the scoring grid is discussed (3.1), as well as the three sources of expertise in relation to the completion of the field stream questionnaire (3.2).

3.1 The scoring grid

In this section, first the general make-up of the scoring grid is presented (3.1.1), followed by a look at the four variable answer elements (VAE) (3.1.2). The basic method of calculation is then presented (3.1.3) and the options 'Unknown' and 'N/A' discussed (3.1.4). Finally the distribution of the scores over the spheres of life and the incidence of violence is explained (3.1.5).

³ Both versions are also available in Arabic and French.

3.1.1 General make-up of the scoring grid

The scoring grid has been developed with a column for 'No' and four columns for the different categories of 'Yes' (Diagram 11) in order to take into account the diverse character of persecution evident in countries.

Diagram 11: Scoring grid for the WWL questionnaire

	No	Yes, somewhat or rarely	Yes, significantly	Yes, very significantly	Yes, absolutely
	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
(1) Proportion of types of Christianity	None	up to 1/4	>1/4 - 2/4	>2/4 - 3/4	>3/4 - 1
(2) Proportion of inhabited territory	None	up to 1/4	>1/4 - 2/4	>2/4 - 3/4	>3/4 - 1
(3) Intensity	None	Low	Medium	High	Very high
(4) Frequency	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent	Permanent

The answer to each question in blocks 1 to 5 is calculated from the average of the four elements discussed in Section 1.5:

- 1) Proportion of types of Christianity persecuted
- 2) Proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution
- 3) Intensity of persecution
- 4) Frequency of persecution.

Ideally, all questionnaires should be filled out electronically since the software automatically asks the respondent to answer all four elements and calculates the average.

For those without access to a computer, a paper version is available which contains the scoring grid under each question. (See Appendix 5A.) The respondent will not have to do the calculation of the question score but will only need to score each line of the scoring grid. The calculations are done electronically when the results are transferred to electronic format.

In case of queries into possible errors (and for future reference), the original paper forms need to be stored at the level where the transfer to an electronic format took place.

3.1.2 The four variable-answer elements of the scoring grid

As has been mentioned above, the scoring grid has four variable-answer elements that determine the score for each question of blocks 1 to 5:

- 1) Proportion of types of Christianity persecuted (3.1.2.1)
- 2) Proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution (3.1.2.2)
- 3) Intensity of persecution (3.1.2.3)
- 4) Frequency of persecution (3.1.2.4).

The score for each question is made up of the average of the sub-scores for each of the four elements.

3.1.2.1 Proportion of types of Christianity persecuted

The first element is the proportion of types of Christianity persecuted. The WWL methodology distinguishes between four types of Christianity (see Section 1.5.1). Sometimes all four exist in a country, sometimes not. The respondent is asked to indicate which types exist in the country. Diagram 12 shows the possible division of scores for different situations i.e. presence of 1 to 4 types of Christianity in the country and the proportion of these types affected by persecution.

Diagram 12: Attribution of scores to the proportion of types of Christianity persecuted

Proportion of types of Christianity persecuted	4 types of Christianity are present in the country	3 types of Christianity are present in the country	2 types of Christianity are present in the country	1 type of Christianity is present in the country
0 – 1/4	1 out of 4 types affected	-	-	-
>1/4 - 2/4	2 out of 4 types affected	1 out of 3 types affected	1 out of 2 types affected	-
>2/4 - 3/4	3 out of 4 types affected	2 out of 3 types affected	-	-
>3/4 – 1	4 out of 4 types affected	3 out of 3 types affected	2 out of 2 types affected	1 type affected

For instance, if all four categories of Christianity exist, each type stands for 1/4. If a certain situation concerns two of those four in the application of the scoring grid, the answer would be 2/4 and thus produce a sub-score for this element of 2 points (“Yes, significantly”). If there is only one type of Christianity in a country, and a specific situation concerns this type of Christianity (e.g. MBBs in Somalia), the answer is immediately 1/1 and makes a sub-score of 4 points (“Yes, absolutely”).

There might also be only two or three different types of Christianity in a country. The respondent will then act according to the method mentioned above.

3.1.2.2 Proportion of inhabited territory of country affected by persecution

The second element is the proportion of inhabited territory of the country affected by persecution. This territorial proportion is related to clearly identifiable geographic areas.

A case of discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution may be prevalent in a limited part of the country or in the whole country. Therefore, the proportion of the country affected can vary between:

- 0 - 1/4
- >1/4-1/2
- >1/2-3/4
- >3/4-1

3.1.2.3 Intensity of persecution

The third element is the intensity of the persecution situation, which can be 'low', 'medium' 'high' or 'very high'.

The answer options for this element are defined as follows:

- **low:** if the issue in question can be dealt with or processed quite easily;
- **medium:** if the issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with more difficulty than if it were low;
- **high:** if the issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with difficulty;
- **very high:** if the issue in question can only be dealt with or processed with very great difficulty.

3.1.2.4 Frequency of persecution

The fourth element is the frequency of the persecution situation under scrutiny in the respective question, which can be 'sporadic', 'quite frequent', 'frequent' or 'permanent'.

The answer options of this element are defined as follows:

- **sporadic:** if the issue in question is true, but only every now and then;
- **quite frequent:** if the issue in question is less often not true than it is true, but is still more true than to say it is sporadically true;
- **frequent:** if the issue in question is more often true than it is not true, but is not always true;
- **permanent:** if the issue in question is always true or true with rare exceptions.

3.1.3 The basic method of calculation

In this section, it is first shown how the basic method of calculation functions to bring the scoring grid's desired outcome (3.1.3.1). The WWL calculation model is then introduced (3.1.3.2).

3.1.3.1 Desired outcome of the scoring grid

The scoring grid was designed to fulfill the following:

- On the micro level: To obtain answers "No" or "Yes" (on various levels) to individual questions, whereby "yes" can be on a scale between 1 and 4. This gives an insight into the details of persecution in the different spheres of life.
- On the macro-level: To obtain a final score at country level for transnational comparison of persecution in individual countries.

The four variable answer elements belonging to the scoring grid were selected for their analytical value and due to the feasibility of their measurement ('feasible' meaning it can be sufficiently answered for the purposes of the WWL questionnaire).

The first two answer elements in the scoring grid (proportion of types of Christianity persecuted and proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution) are based on observable facts. The last two answer elements in the scoring grid (intensity of persecution and frequency of persecution) are based on the opinion and knowledge of the expert filling out the questionnaire. A justification for the opinion stated is then included in the comments section.

3.1.3.2 Calculation model at the question level

In order to construct a model, the reality described by the scoring grid can be considered four-dimensional. This is only an approximation to a very complex reality. However, using these four dimensions with their four scoring options makes it possible to break down reality to such an extent that makes it possible to characterize the specific persecution situation within a country. At the same time, the combination of the four variables makes up for the lack of precision of the individual variables to some degree.

The calculation model for the WWL was designed in order to satisfy the following conditions:

- All four variables are to have equal weight – there is no justification for giving one variable more weight than the others.
- A linear distribution of results is desirable.
- An average on the middle of the scale is desirable.
- Additionally, for practical purposes the design must strive for simplicity and enable the respondent to cope without a calculator.

Taking into account these considerations, the following calculation model has been chosen:

$$S = (\text{Scores for 'Proportion of types of Christianity persecuted'} \\ + \text{'Proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution'} \\ + \text{'Intensity of persecution'} + \text{'Frequency of persecution'}) / 4$$

Based on the concept of simplicity and manual calculation, a scale of four points is adopted for the individual question level.

Each answer element allows for four options in case the answer is 'Yes'. That means that each answer element can score 1, 2, 3 or 4 points. In the case of a 'Yes', a question can therefore receive a total score between 4 and 16 points to be divided by 4. In case of a 'No', the answer is automatically 0.

The scores to the answers at the levels of the questions, the blocks and the total scores are taken in their unrounded decimal form for further calculation.⁴

All scores are presented rounded to three decimal places, except for the final country scores appearing on the published WWL. If the answers are rounded to less decimal places, the sum of the blocks might not correspond exactly with the rounded total scores for the country.

3.1.4 Options 'Unknown' and 'N/A'

The options 'Unknown' and 'N/A' can also be chosen by the respondent, and explained in the comments column. The 'Unknown' option is often related to a lack of knowledge of the respondent. The 'N/A' option is normally given by respondents when they feel that the situation they cover cannot be described by the answers to the questions.

⁴ Experience has shown that rounding numbers to zero decimal places (as was initially intended for the sake of simplicity) led to a lack of precision.

The WWR team tries to resolve these types of response but this is not always possible. The methodology for dealing with unresolved 'Unknown' and 'N/A' responses is explained in Section 3.2.3.

3.1.5 Distribution of scores over the spheres of life and violence

The WVL questionnaire has six blocks that deal with the different spheres of life and violence. The highest possible total score for all blocks together is 100 points. Diagram 13 shows the distribution of these points over the six blocks

Diagram 13: Distribution of scores over the spheres of life and violence, using a block specific reduction factor

Block	Name	Nr. Questions	Maximum pts (a)	Reduction factor ^{1/}	New maximal total
1	Private Life	10	40	0.41667	16.667
2	Family Life	13	52	0.32051	16.667
3	Community Life	13	52	0.32051	16.667
4	National Life	16	64	0.26042	16.667
5	Church Life	20	80	0.20833	16.667
6	Plain Violence	12	90	0.18519	16.667
All		96	378	N/A	100

^{1/} Reduction factor (f) for blocks 1 to 6: $f=100/6/a$

Each question in block 1 to 5 can score 0 points ('No') or between 4-16 points (four 'Yes' options). The total score per question is then divided by four to give the average per element, thus reducing the possible final scores per question to 0-4 points.

The maximum score per block is defined by the number of questions per block multiplied by 4 points. However, because most blocks have a different number of questions and each block is designed to have equal value, the scores are proportionally reduced to $100/6 = 16.667$ points. The reduction factor for each block is thus block specific, except for family life and community life that have the same amount of questions.

The actual block total (the total of the answers to all questions in that block for a specific questionnaire) is multiplied by the respective reduction factor to give each block the same weighting. The final score for blocks 1 to 5 is the sum of all block totals of that questionnaire.

Block 6 (violence) is special in the sense that the allocation of points per question does not follow the routine of blocks 1-5. The first two questions of block 6, which deal with killings of Christians and attacks on churches and other Christian buildings, can get a maximum of 30 points each. The other 10 questions share 30 points.

For the first two questions of block 6 each killing or building attacked scores 3 points. This means that when 10 Christians are killed or churches or other Christian buildings attacked, the score for that question will be the maximum score. This way, the WVL methodology puts extra emphasis on killings and attacks on churches over against other forms of violence, because both are extremes and hit hard, also affecting Christians and churches not directly attacked.

For the other 10 questions, the maximum score of 3 points is calculated according to the number of incidents thus: 1 case (1 pt), 2-9 cases (2pts) and 10 or more cases (3 pts).

The capping of scores for violent incidents in the WWL methodology clearly places an emphasis on the pressure Christians experience (*squeeze*) over against violence (*smash*). Ten Christians killed or 10 churches heavily attacked result in the same score as 100 or 1,000 of such incidents.

This does not mean that persecution is thus heavily underestimated. If in a country the hostilities against Christians are such that tens or hundreds or even thousands are killed or buildings attacked, this is certainly going to influence the general atmosphere in the country. In other words, the pressure or *squeeze* against Christians measured in the other blocks will be high.

3.2 Sources of expertise in relation to the field stream questionnaires

In the following sections, first the different sources of expertise will be discussed (3.2.1), then how these sources relate to the field stream questionnaires (3.2.2), and thirdly, the topic of ‘Unknown’ and ‘N/A’ answers will be dealt with (3.2.3).

3.2.1 Sources of expertise

The final scoring of the WWL questionnaire is the result of the interplay of three sources of expertise (Diagram 14).

Diagram 14: Three sources of expertise for completing the WWL questionnaires

Sources of expertise	Contribution
Open Doors’ staff and in-country key contacts	Draft versions of field stream questionnaires
External experts	Information for cross-checking draft versions of field stream questionnaires through full questionnaires, short questionnaires, World Watch Surveys (or adapted forms of it), input for VATs, or knowledge sharing through personal contact
WWR persecution analysts	Final versions of the field stream questionnaires, after consultation with the other two sources of expertise

The first source of expertise is Open Doors’ field staff and key contacts in the country. The WWL questionnaire is filled out by Open Doors’ field staff at country level, gathering information through a number of key contacts in the country. They may do this through sending their key contacts (parts of) the questionnaires, direct contact or other ways. These contacts are considered ‘key’ contacts because they represent different networks. This gives the data gathering process a ‘grassroots’ character.

A member of Open Doors' field staff at regional level coordinates the country level results. He/she may also be involved in the feedback process with the WWR persecution analysts (together with country level staff) - and does a plausibility check.

The second source of expertise is the external experts. The external experts contribute in a variety of ways. Ideally they complete the full version of the WWL questionnaire. However, they may also contribute by completing a short questionnaire, World Watch Survey or VAT, or by sharing knowledge through personal contact (telephone, internet or face-to-face).

The external experts have different professional backgrounds:

- Legal scholars with extensive experience in the field of human rights, constitutional law and governance.
- Public policy researchers.
- International development experts.
- Lecturers for different disciplines (some are professors at universities).
- International security experts.
- Christian ministry workers (missionaries, some of them with many years of experience in the country).
- Heads of Christian NGOs in the country.
- Staff of national or international human rights organizations dealing with freedom of religion or belief.

The third source of expertise is the team of persecution analysts at WWR. They work towards a final version of the field stream questionnaires by gathering data from the different sources of information, giving feedback to the respondents, and putting all information together.

The WWR team consists of one communicator and five researchers, all of them having university degrees. One of the persecution analysts has successfully accomplished a PhD, while another analyst is a PhD student. The director of the team has a university degree too, and is a PhD student as well. Two well-educated part-timers gather data on internet on violent incidents against Christians and churches in English and Arabic language fields.

3.2.2 Field stream questionnaires

The WWL questionnaire is actually a field stream questionnaire, which tries to penetrate as deep into the country as it can. The people who fill out the questionnaire are Open Doors' field staff members, and their network of key contacts in the country. These key contacts themselves represent different networks. It gives the data gathering process a 'grassroots' character.

External experts provide alternative results for the content of the field stream questionnaires. These results are used by the persecution analysts to do cross-checks of the field stream questionnaires which are provided by the Open Doors' staff and key contacts.

The persecution analysts at WWR can suggest variations in the application of the scoring grid to the respondents. This is a technical intervention. This procedure is needed to weed out inconsistencies in the answering process and is done in agreement with the respondents.

The persecution analysts, being experts themselves, may also suggest variations in the scoring of the respondents in relation to their own knowledge and insight, but only apply changes *in agreement* with the respondents. This means that the role of the persecution analyst is not merely reactive but can also be proactive.

3.2.3 Dealing with responses ‘Unknown’ and ‘N/A’

This section deals with the occurrence of responses ‘Unknown’ or ‘N/A’. First the section discusses ‘Unknown’ (3.2.3.1), then ‘N/A’ (3.2.3.2).

3.2.3.1 Dealing with responses ‘Unknown’

When questions are answered with ‘Unknown’, there are three options for resolving these answers:

- Preferred route: resolution;
- If this is not possible, and there are sufficient other respondents: average of other responses;
- If the answer cannot be known, the question is discounted and the reduction factor adjusted.

Resolution

WWR prefers to continue working with respondents on questionnaires until all responses ‘Unknown’ are resolved by consensus with the respondent. This can work if:

- the respondent cooperates;
- the response is indeed ‘knowable’, which means that it is a matter of information lacking on the part of the individual respondent and not a matter of (sufficiently precise) information simply not being available for the period under examination in the respective country.

Considering other responses

If this is not possible, and there are sufficient other respondents, WWR will take the average of the other responses. If there are for instance three respondents, the first scores 3, the second scores 2, and the third scores “Unknown” for a question, it can be argued that one of the reasons for asking several respondents is to gather complementary expertise. Therefore, if there is one expert that turns out to have insufficient knowledge, the expertise of the two others outbalances this response.

Question discounted

The answer ‘Unknown’ will always be discussed with the respondent, and if possible changed to another score. If this happens for the same question with all respondents and it is not possible to reach an agreement, then the question is awarded 0 points and is not going to be taken into account in the final score.

In order to prevent an artificially low score for countries that are secretive and hide their pressure and violence well, the following is done when giving 0 points to an unresolvable question: The reduction factor for that block needs to be adjusted for that single questionnaire,

so that the remainder of the questions of that block together will be able to make up a full block score (16.667).

Reliability of results

All three options for 'Unknown' influence the degree of reliability of the results, be it in varying degrees. For options 1 and 2 this can be considered sufficiently resolved through the contributed expertise of WWR staff and/or other respondents. For option 3 it could contribute to a lower reliability that has to be accounted for when the number of questions with response 'Unknown' is too big. In the five years that the (actual) WWL methodology is in operation, such a situation has never occurred.

3.2.3.2 Dealing with responses 'N/A'

When questions are answered with 'N/A', it means that the respondent thinks the question does not match the situation under study. This may or may not be correct.

In many cases the answer 'N/A' is given, because the situation is so severe that the questions reflecting the nuances of the respective sphere of life simply seem not to respond to the situation. The most extreme situation in this respect is when church life is simply made totally impossible by government or social groups. In that case the questions in the block on the church sphere of life (block 5) normally should get the maximum score.

There may be other cases of the 'N/A' option chosen to answer questions.

In all these cases the WWR persecution analyst acts in analogy to the solutions for 'Unknown'. In short this means either resolving the issue with the respondent or, if this cannot be done, seeing if the other respondents to the same question have a convincing response. If this also does not result in a sufficient answer, the question is discounted.

In terms of reliability of the results, for options 1 and 2 this can be considered sufficiently resolved through the contributed expertise of the WWR staff and/or other respondents. The occurrence of option 3 contributes to a lower level of reliability which has to be accounted for when the number of questions with response 'Unknown' is too big. In the five years that the current WWL methodology has been in operation, such a situation has never occurred.

4. Work Flow and Information Gathering Process

There are two distinct stages in the information gathering process: Defining the determinants of persecution (4.1) and processing the WWL questionnaires (4.2). In this section, a time frame is presented for the WWL process (4.3). Finally some remarks are made about training field researchers and external experts in accomplishing the WWL tasks (4.4).

4.1 Preparation: defining determinants of persecution

Before filling out the questionnaires, respondents need to identify three major determinants of the persecution situation:

- Persecution engines – which persecution engines are active in the country (main and secondary persecution engines)?

- Drivers of persecution – which people or groups are involved in the hostilities against Christians?
- Types of Christianity – which WWL categories of Christianity are present in the country?

Clearly defining these determinants will help the respondent in keeping a sharp focus while filling out the questionnaire. The respondents define the determinants in consultation with the WWR persecution analysts.

4.2 Processing of the WWL questionnaire

4.2.1 Sending WWL questionnaire to Field & receiving first results

The operational process for the field stream questionnaires starts with sending WWL questionnaires to Field (Open Doors' network in the countries under investigation) and asking Field bases to fill out the questionnaires per country:

- WWR persecution analyst sends out questionnaire to the regional field researcher. *There are versions in Word and Excel; in Arabic, English and French.*
- Regional field researcher sends out questionnaire to country field researcher (or other staff) who can fill out the questionnaire at country level.
- Country field researcher forwards questionnaire to in-country key contact persons. *The in-country key contacts may be sent part of a questionnaire or a full questionnaire adapted to their expertise or exposure to this sort of exercises. Sometimes face-to-face contacts can replace filling out questionnaires by key contacts. The country field researcher is responsible for managing this according to his/her own insights.*
- In-country key contact persons fill it out and send it back to the country field researcher.
- Country field researcher integrates reactions to make one Field version for the country.
- Country field researcher sends field stream questionnaire to the regional field researcher.
- Regional field researcher checks main results for the country.
- Regional field researcher sends results for each country to the WWR persecution analyst.

4.2.2 First check by World Watch Research

The WWR persecution analyst then receives the completed WWL questionnaires from Field and performs the first check. The persecution analyst:

- Checks the completed questionnaire(s) for each country on:
 - Consistency of answers with comments;
 - Consistency of (technical) application of scoring grid;
 - Consistency of answers with information block 7;
 - Consistency of answers with own knowledge.
- Discusses proposed corrections of the questionnaire with the country field researcher.
- Checks the main results of his interaction with the country field researcher with the regional field researcher.
- This cycle might be repeated several times in case of persisting differences of opinion.

4.2.3 Cross-check by external experts

4.2.3.1 Introduction

The WWL methodology recognizes the importance of cross-checks of Field results by external experts. Each country requires at least three external expert cross-checks.

To facilitate a cross-check of results by external experts, the WWL methodology has defined two options for their involvement⁵, using different WWL tools:

1. Parallel to the Field process with use of the WWL questionnaire: This means that the external experts fill out the complete questionnaire too.
2. Parallel to the Field process with use of the other tools: This means that the external experts answer short questionnaires, World Watch Surveys or VATs, or are interviewed through internet or face-to-face contacts. This option is less comprehensive than the WWL questionnaire, and may thus be more acceptable to external experts with time constraints.

The persecution analyst works on the consistency check for the results sent in by the external experts. The next step is to integrate the results of the external experts into the results of the field stream questionnaires. The persecution analyst does this in close collaboration with the country and/or regional researchers.

These options produce enriched field stream questionnaires per country. The highest credibility is realized through option 1 (see above). In practice, however, the first and second options are often combined.

4.2.3.2 Details of operational process for involvement of external experts

The operational process for cross-checking field stream questionnaires by external experts runs parallel to the Field process:

- WWR persecution analyst sends the chosen WWL tool(s) for a specific country to one or more external experts. This can be a complete WWL questionnaire or one of the other WWL tools.
- External experts send back the completed WWL tool to the WWR persecution analyst.
- WWR persecution analyst discusses the results of the WWL tool with the external experts:
 - One-by-one or in group setting.
 - Per country or per group of countries.
 - Through internet or live.
 - WWR persecution analyst and external experts come up with conclusions on the country.

⁵ WWR is investigating possibilities to increase the input by external experts through internet survey techniques.

- WWR persecution analyst proposes changes to field stream questionnaires, completed by Field in the parallel process, based on the results and conclusions of the WWL tools completed by external experts.
- WWR persecution analyst discusses proposed changes with the country field researcher.
- WWR persecution analyst finalizes answers for this phase with the country field researcher.
- WWR persecution analyst checks the main results of his interaction with the country field researcher, with the regional field researcher.
- This cycle might be repeated several times in case of persisting differences of opinion.
- The result is now a modified field stream questionnaire that replaces the initial field stream questionnaire.

4.2.4 Final completion by Field & checking by WWR

A final touch of the field stream questionnaires is needed to complete them for changes to the persecution situation in September and October:

- WWR persecution analysts ask the country field researchers for changes needed according to how the pressure or violence against Christians and/or churches has developed in the remaining period September to October.
- If needed, the country field researchers adapt the field stream questionnaires.
- Country field researchers send results to the persecution analysts, informing the regional field researchers.
- WWR persecution analysts check changes on consistency, discuss corrections proposed by them with the country field researchers and finalize the field stream questionnaires per country.

The country score is taken from the now finalized field stream questionnaire.

4.2.5 Plausibility check & follow-up by WWR

Once the country scores have been calculated, a preliminary ranking table with the key scores is drafted. The following steps finalize the WWL process:

- Ranking table to be discussed with internal and/or external experts on countries, regions and/or world. They will discuss if the outcome reflects the real situation i.e. the assumed correct sequence of the 50 WWL countries on the WWL. *Document provided: Draft version of the ranking table with the key scores.*
- In cases of doubt, the WWR persecution analysts revisit the country questionnaires, and check with the country field researchers if misinterpretations were given. If not, no changes will be made. If however misinterpretations are found, changes will be made and clearly registered to prevent undue manipulation of results.
- If needed, a new final ranking table is produced, including key scores (see Appendix 6 for the example of WWL 2016).

4.3 Time frame for the WWL process

The WWL process starts at the beginning of July and extends until December (Diagram 15).

Diagram 15: Time frame for the WWL process

Processing the WWL questionnaire	
Send WWL questionnaire to Field & receive first results	July 1 - August 31
Send WWL questionnaire or other WWL tools to external experts & receive first results	August 1 – August 31
First check by WWR	September 1 - October 31
Final completion by Field & external experts & check by WWR	October 15 – November 22
Overall check & follow-up by WWR	November 23 – November 30
Finalization of new WWL (scores and ranking)	December 1 - December 7
Finalization of other documentation for release of WWL	December 1 – January 7

4.4 Learning-by-doing and peer group review

For the persecution analysts of WWR, working on the WWL with external experts has an element of on-the-job training for the external experts. Once WWR has worked with them, they usually start to understand how the whole WWL exercise is set up. Ideally, after one or two successive years, they are in a position to fill out the complete WWL questionnaire for future WWLs, if needed.

For Field, this on-the-job training and mutual learning-by-doing has already been taking place for years. Every successive year, however, adds to this experience, especially when major changes are made to the methodology as was the case for WWL 2013.

WWR organizes training sessions with Field colleagues responsible for filling out the questionnaires annually. This can be through internet platforms or face-to-face. These sessions are for questions-and-answers and for the exchange of experiences concerning the WWL questionnaire and methodology.

Meanwhile internal peer group review by the WWR persecution analysts during the information gathering process is important for the comparability of the results of the different countries. The key moments for these reviews are:

- During the first check of the Field questionnaires by WWR after the consistency check and before discussing proposed corrections with the country field researchers;
- During the cross-check by external experts before discussing identified gaps or proposed changes to the field stream questionnaires with the country field researcher.

Peer group review can be done in different ways. Apart from discussing parts of the WWL questionnaires as a team, the persecution analysts check parts of each other's work in pairs.

During the WWL preparation period, WWR regularly encounters situations that are difficult to match with the questions, or questions that could be considered ambiguous in the light of certain realities. The team discusses them, and decides on ‘team behavior’ towards them. The results of these discussions are recorded for future use.

5. Analysis and communication of results

Five key elements of the analysis and communication of the WWL results are the persecution pattern (5.1), the listing of countries according to scores (5.2), the grouping of country scores (5.3), the ranking of countries (5.4) and the country persecution dynamics (5.5).

5.1 Persecution pattern

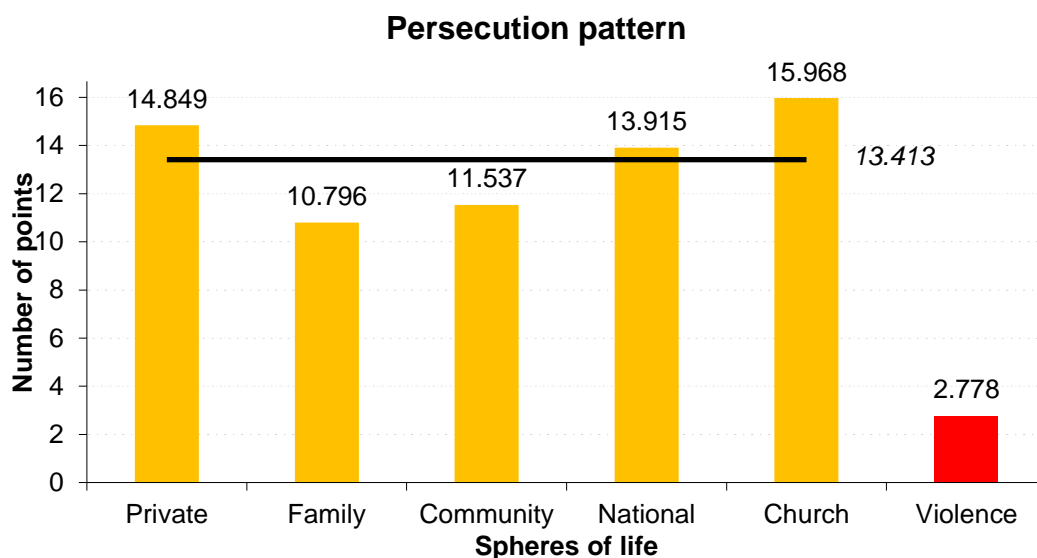
The detailed country scores of the 6 blocks of the WWL questionnaire converge into a specific pattern, the *country persecution pattern*. This persecution pattern consists of the following elements:

- The average score over blocks 1 to 5;
- The deviance from the average score of the scores for the different spheres of life;
- The level of violence experienced by Christians in the country.

These elements are characteristic for the persecution situation in the country.

The example below is for Uzbekistan (WWL 2016). In Uzbekistan two persecution engines were identified: *Dictatorial paranoia* (main persecution engine) and *Islamic oppression* (secondary persecution engine). Diagram 16 presents the persecution pattern of Uzbekistan.

Diagram 16: Persecution pattern for Uzbekistan



(Please note: The numbers above are displayed to three decimal places. They are not to be read as thousands.)

The persecution pattern for Uzbekistan (Diagram 16) shows the scores for the persecution engines *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Islamic oppression*:

- The pressure on Christians has risen slightly, as can be seen by the average score over the first five blocks rising from 12.995 (WWL 2015) to 13.413.
- Pressure is strongest in the *private, national, and church spheres*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine, strongly driven by government officials at any level from local to national. Pressure from *Islamic oppression* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is mainly exerted by the social environment.
- The score for the violence block has fallen from 4.074 (WWL 2015) to 2.778. This suggests that either the number of violent incidents has decreased (which does not seem very likely) or that believers have become more afraid to report incidents.

World Watch Research recognizes the potential for using the persecution pattern as part of the consistency check for questionnaires. The persecution pattern can also serve to predict trends in ongoing persecution in countries on the WWL. Finally the persecution pattern can serve as a tool for ‘early warning’ about upcoming persecution in countries not yet on the WWL.

5.2 Listing of countries according to scores

As a result of the WWL process each country gets a specific final score. This final score is used to determine the order of countries from position 1 to 50 on the annual WWL (Appendix 6; example of WWL 2016).

The WWL methodology makes it possible to compare different persecution realities, because it takes its starting point in the pressure and violence Christians experience in their different *spheres of life*. Whether this pressure or violence originates from the same or different persecution engines is not relevant for the final scores.

It follows that all countries of the world can be compared for pressure on and violence against Christians regardless of the origin of these hostilities.

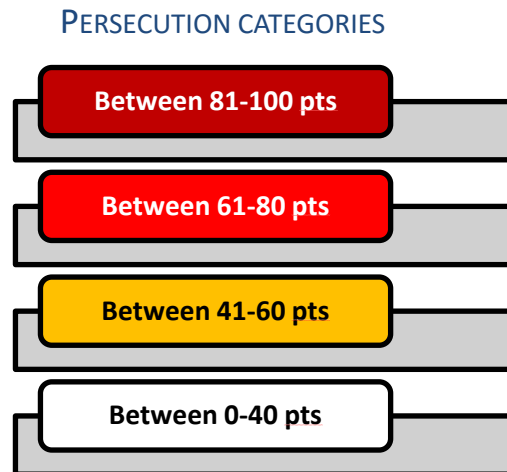
The WWL methodology does not produce ‘absolute scores’. This is because WWL has not established standardized norms and measures against which to score specific situations.

The WWL scores are ‘comparative scores’. This means that using the methodology, country A gets a score A and country B gets a score B. Comparing scores A and B (and further scores) can give the best indication of the severity of the persecution situation. Scoring a single country only would be less meaningful.

5.3 Grouping of country scores

The degree of persecution is characterized by a scale of 0 to 100 points, directly linked to a set of 84 questions covering five spheres of life and the prevalence of violent incidents. This scale of 0 to 100 points is split up into four categories, which are based on specific scoring intervals (Diagram 17).

Diagram 17: Four persecution categories with their scoring intervals



Developed by World Watch Research

The meaning of the persecution categories is as follows:

- **Extreme:** Points range 81-100 shows where there is literally no free exercise of Christian faith allowed in the society at large. Most churches are banned, or so controlled as to have no freedom of expression at all. The very fact of being a Christian draws persecution.
- **Very High:** Points range 61-80 shows where the exercise of Christian faith is so difficult that most Christians fear to witness for their faith. In some cases persecution is restricted to particular areas of the country where campaigns waged against Christians may be very violent and long term.
- **High:** Points range 41 to 60 shows where living as a Christian means that although there may be a tolerated church which enjoys some freedom, in practice prominent Christians are targeted, churches themselves subject to significant restrictions, and the culture remains largely hostile to Christian presence in such areas as education and employment. In some countries persecution is severe but restricted to particular geographical areas.
- **Variable:** Points range 0 to 40 shows situations ranging from where the religious freedom of Christians is fully accepted to situations where this freedom is infringed, but not to the same degree as in the categories above. Sometimes this infringement is very serious but only in small geographical areas.

It is important to realize that, since the WWL is limited to a table of 50 countries, in practice the category “high” on the WWL starts in the middle of the point range (i.e. somewhere between 41-60 points). In other words, the threshold score for entering the WWL is often higher than 41 points. Countries with scores between 41 and that threshold value are not listed, but are still recognized as having problematic persecution situations. That is why WWR also produces an annual list of WWL Persecution Watch Countries. This list presents the countries that were scored for the respective WWL exercise, and obtained points between 41 and the threshold value to enter that WWL. In those countries a high level of persecution of Christians and churches is also prevalent.

5.4 Ranking of countries

The WWL ranks countries according to their final scores. The most important reason for ranking countries is to be able to present a complex reality to the broader public. For this to be done effectively, the WWL rankings must always be used together with the corresponding country persecution dynamics which explain the particularities of the persecution situation (see Section 5.5).

The ranking gives the possibility of comparing the countries on the WWL with each other. They do not however permit the comparison of the published ranking in the foregoing WWL exercise with the actual one. This is because a system of ranking provides relative positions based on a set of country scores which differ from year to year.

It can for instance happen that a country receives a lower position on the WWL even though the country scores are higher than in the WWL of the year before. When this happens, it simply indicates that other countries have received an even higher score and have, therefore, ended up higher on the WWL.

When comparing country ranking within the same WWL, it can happen that several countries with close scores nevertheless occupy different positions on the WWL. The differences between these ranks are then not necessarily very meaningful. This is due to the margin of statistical error inherent in any such exercise.

The relevance of the ranking produced by the WWL is reflected more adequately by considering them in close connection with the both block scores and end-scores. Scores can also be compared meaningfully over the years. The WWL has been in production since WWL 1993. Comparison of the data from WWL 1993 to WWL 2017 yields interesting results, although there have been several changes in the methodology over those years.

5.5 Country persecution dynamics

Another important presentation tool is a document called the *country persecution dynamics*. This document gives a concise background analysis about each country on the WWL that is based on the results of the questionnaires, and additional back-ground information researched by WWR.

In Appendix 7 the templates for both the short version (7A) and long version (7B) of the *country persecution dynamics* have been supplied.

6. Process of evaluation and credibility rating

World Watch Research has developed a system of credibility rating. This is an internal rating. It is mainly applied to countries listed in the WWL but can also be used to check on the consistent application of the other tools for monitoring persecution in order to be sure the right countries are among the WWL Top 50. This system starts with credibility levels for each country (6.1) and then looks at the credibility level for the overall composition of the WWL Top 50 (6.2).

Please note this credibility rating is still in its pilot phase.

6.1 Credibility of WWL results at country level

The system of credibility rating is based on:

- **A:** The length of the information chain employed by Field;
- **B:** The number of cross-checks provided by external experts for each field stream questionnaire delivered by Field. This can be through WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools.
- **C:** The level of completion of WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools delivered by Field or external experts.

A: The length of the information chain employed by Field

The length of the information chain employed by Field for the field stream questionnaire is four (see Section 4.2.1): WWR persecution analyst → regional field researcher → country field researcher → in-country key contacts. The number of in-country key contacts can be 0, 1 to 4, 5 to 9, or 10 or more.

This element is rated as follows:

- Each chain element receives a point, so maximum is 4 points.
- Factor 1.0 on fourth chain element if 10 or more in-country key contacts involved.
- Factor 0.75 on fourth chain element if between 5 to 9 in-country key contacts involved.
- Factor 0.5 on fourth chain element if between 1 to 4 in-country key contacts involved.
- Factor 0 on fourth chain element if no in-country key contact involved.

Diagram 18 presents the calculation table for element A of the internal credibility rating, which is the length of the information chain employed by Field for the field stream questionnaire.

*Diagram 18: Calculation table for element A of the credibility rating:
The length of the information chain employed by Field for the field stream questionnaire*

A. Chain length of information-gathering for the field stream questionnaire (maximum of 4 points)				
	Number of chain elements used	Reduction factor for number of in-country key contacts	Resulting rate	Resulting rate for country
Field stream questionnaire				

In some cases, a country field researcher is not in place but the regional field researcher has organized in-country research in another way. That is acceptable as long as information-gathering from the grass-roots level upwards can be done in four steps. However, WWR will assess if the alternative solution has the same quality as the normative situation.

Country field researchers often check their results with their country managers. This is not a prerequisite for filling out questionnaires.

B: Cross-checks by external experts

Each field stream questionnaire delivered by Field needs cross-checking by external experts in the form of completed WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools. Direct contact (via internet or face-to-face) is also acceptable but must meet certain conditions to contribute to the credibility rate. The number of cross-checks per finalized field stream questionnaire can be 0, 1, 2, or 3 or more.

This element is rated as follows:

- Factor 1.0 for a field stream questionnaire with 3 or more external expert cross-checks.
- Factor 0.75 for a field stream questionnaire with 2 external expert cross-checks.
- Factor 0.5 for a field stream questionnaire with 1 external expert cross-check.
- Factor 0 for a field stream questionnaire with no external expert cross-check.

External experts may send in full WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools. Although the follow-up process of the other WWL tools normally guarantees a sufficient quality of cross-check, the quality of a completed WWL questionnaire including comments column is valued higher than other WWL tools.

The use of other WWL tools instead of WWL questionnaires reduces the final score for the country by a factor, proportional to the number of WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools used.

This element is rated as follows:

- Factor 1.0 if 91-100% of cross-checks by external experts is done through full WWL questionnaires.
- Factor 0.9 if 61-90% of cross-checks by external experts is done through full WWL questionnaires.
- Factor 0.8 if 31-60% of cross-checks by external experts is done through full WWL questionnaires.
- Factor 0.7 if 0-30% of cross-checks by external experts is done through full WWL questionnaires.

Diagram 19 shows the calculation table for element B of the internal credibility rate (namely the cross-checking of a field stream questionnaire by external experts).

*Diagram 19: Calculation table for element B of the credibility rating:
Cross-checks by external experts of a field stream questionnaire*

B. External experts' cross-check of a field stream questionnaire using WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools (maximum of 4 points)				
	Reduction factor for number of cross-checks by external experts	Resulting rate for the field stream questionnaire (proportionated to max. 4 points)	Reduction factor for use of other WWL tools (instead of full questionnaire)	Resulting rate for country
Field stream questionnaire				

C: Level of completion of WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools

WWL questionnaires (full version; with data entered by Field or by external experts) or other WWL tools are not always fully completed, especially when they are done by external experts. Partially completed WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools have less value than fully completed ones. Therefore a partly completed document gives a negative rating effect.

This element is rated as follows:

- Every WWL questionnaire or other WWL tool is given one point.
- Reduction factors for a fully or partly completed WWL questionnaire:
 - factor 1.0: all answers given with comments;
 - factor 0.5: all answers given but with no or few comments;
 - factor 0.5: part of answers given but with comments;
 - factor 0.25: part of answers given with no or few comments.
- Reduction factors for a fully or partly completed other WWL tool:
 - factor 1.0: WWL tool well completed;
 - factor 0.5: WWL tool partly completed;
 - factor 0.25: WWL poorly completed.

- The total number of points given to the WWL questionnaires and other WWL tools will be divided by the maximal number of points that could be given and proportionated to 4 points.

Diagram 20 shows the calculation table for element C of the internal credibility rate which is the assessment of the level of completion of WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools used for one specific country.

*Diagram 20: Calculation table for element C of the credibility rating:
Level of completion of WWL questionnaires or other WWL tools used for the country*

C. Fully or partly completed WWL questionnaires or World Watch Surveys by Field or by external experts (maximum of 4 points)						
Number of WWL questionnaires (full version) received for the country	Reduction factor applied				Resulting sub-rate	
	1.0	0.75	0.5	0.25		
Number of other WWL tools received for the country	Reduction factor applied				Resulting sub-rate	
	1.0	0.75	0.5	0.25		
Total number of WWL questionnaires and other WWL tools received for the country					Resulting total rate	Resulting rate for country proportionated to max. 4 points

Final credibility rating at country level

The final credibility rating at country level is the sum of the calculations for the elements A, B and C (Diagram 21).

Diagram 21: Calculation table for the credibility rating at country level for the WWL

Credibility rating at country level for the WWL (max. 12 points)		
Element	Rate	Observation
A		
B		
C		
TOTAL		

The WWL methodology does not propose an absolute minimum value for the credibility rating at country level. Rather than obtaining absolute values, importance is laid on getting a higher credibility rate each year or on maintaining it at a high level.

6.2 Credibility of WWL results at the overall level

The credibility rating of the WWL process is determined by two factors. In the first place, by the average credibility rate for the countries on the WWL (6.2.1). In the second place, by the consistent application of RAPT, and the short questionnaire, World Watch Survey or VAT, in order to be sure the right countries are among the WWL top 50. The resulting picture is a simple credibility end rate (6.2.2).

6.2.1 Average credibility rate per country

The average credibility rate per country can be easily defined by adding the separate ratings and dividing them by 50 (Diagram 22).

Diagram 22: Calculation table for the average credibility rate for the 50 WWL countries

Average credibility rate for the 50 WWL countries (max. 12 points)	
Total of the 50 country rates	Average rate per country

6.2.2 Consistent application of WWL selection tools and resulting credibility rating for the WWL

It is one thing to know the credibility of the process behind the countries on the WWL top 50, it is another thing to be sure that no countries have been overlooked. The credibility of the WWL process as a whole is therefore also linked to the proper application of the first and second step selection tools: RAPT; short questionnaire, World Watch Survey or VAT.

To account for this element a reduction factor is applied to the resulting average credibility rate per country that can range between 0.8 and 1.0:

- Factor 1.0: all selection tools well applied for the countries that did not enter the WWL top 50;

- Factor 0.9: clear gaps in the application of the selection tools for the countries that did not make it to the WWL top 50, with serious consequences in the sense that one country might have made it to the list if applied well;
- Factor 0.8: clear gaps in the application of the selection tools for the countries that did not make it to the WWL top 50 to such an extent that two or more countries might have made it to the list if applied well.

Diagram 23 presents the resulting calculation table for the overall credibility rate for the WWL, looking as well at the quality of the scoring process for both the countries on the list, and for the countries that did not make it onto the list.

Diagram 20: Calculation table for the overall credibility rate for the WWL

Credibility rate for the WWL (max. 12 points)				
Average rate per country on the WWL	Reduction factor applied			Resulting credibility rate for the WWL
	1.0	0.9	0.8	

The WWL methodology does not propose an absolute minimum value for the overall credibility rate for the WWL. Rather than seeking absolute values, importance is laid on getting the rate higher each year or on maintaining it at a high level.

GLOSSARY

of terms and abbreviations used in the WWL methodology

Christian	WWL definition: Anyone who self-identifies as a Christian and/or someone belonging to a Christian community as defined by the church's historic creeds. See Section 1.1.
Credibility rating	This attempts to measure the quality (and hence reliability) of information received back from Open Doors' field staff and external experts via questionnaires and other sources. See Section 6.
Field stream questionnaire	Questionnaires which have been filled out by Open Doors' field staff, after input from their network of in-country key contacts.
Impulse, exclusivist	Considering a person who is not part of one's own group to be an inferior human being or infidel. It is considered permissible to deal with such a person in bizarre, amoral ways that would never be allowed in one's own group without compromising one's own moral standards. The <i>exclusivist impulse</i> is always related to a strong religious presence. See Section 1.2.3.
Impulse, exploitive	Seeking to obtain as many resources as possible for oneself and one's small, favorite social environment, legally or illegally. See Section 1.2.3.
Impulse, secularist	Putting pressure on individuals or groups that do not adhere to the dominant ideology which is always anti-religious or skeptical of organized religion to some degree. See Section 1.2.3.
Persecution	WWL definition: Any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians. See Section 1.1.
Persecution drivers	These are drivers of persecution engines and are people and/or groups embodying the exclusivist, exploitative and secularist impulses in society. See Section 1.2.5.
Persecution dynamics	The various factors in a country causing the persecution of Christians. As part of the WWL process country reports are published under the heading: Country persecution dynamics.
Persecution eclipse	Public awareness of a particular form of persecution is made minimal through the concurrent existence of political, social, economic, ethnic and/or other conflicts. For an example in Nigeria see: http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/research/2576904 .
Persecution engines	These act as vehicles for the different elementary human impulses to achieve exclusive, absolute power. See Section 1.2.4.
RAPT	Rapid Appraisal Tool – This enables WWR to get a quick idea of the situation in almost all countries of the world and provides justification for the non-inclusion of countries in WWL. See Section 2.2.
Scoring grid	Developed with one column for 'No' and four columns for the different categories of 'Yes' in order to take into account the diverse character of persecution evident in countries. See Section 3.1.1.
Smash	Violence against Christians. See Section 1.3.
Spheres of life	The WWL methodology has defined 5 areas of daily life for documenting and scoring the pressure experienced by Christians in a given country:

	<i>private life, family life, community life, national life, church life.</i> See Section 1.4.
Squeeze	Pressure on Christians. See Section 1.3.
Variables	The WWL methodology has defined four variables that are important to understand the spread and degree of persecution in the country: proportion of types of Christianity persecuted (1.5.1), proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution (1.5.2), intensity of persecution (1.5.3), and frequency of persecution (1.5.4).
VAT	Vulnerability Assessment Tool – An alternative to ‘short questionnaire’ for further country investigation after RAPT, particularly where more volatile situations exist. VAT puts the vulnerability of Christians in the country under scrutiny. See Section 2.5.
WWL	World Watch List – A list of 50 countries published annually by Open Doors showing where the persecution of Christians is most severe.
WWR	World Watch Research – Research Unit funded by Open Doors International.
World Watch Survey	An alternative version of the Short questionnaire for further investigation after RAPT and used by external experts for cross-checking questionnaires returned by Field. See Section 2.4.

LIST OF APPENDICES (see separate document)

Please note:

The documents listed here are to be found in a separate accompanying document.

Appendix 1A: Rapid Appraisal Tool

Appendix 1B: Values of the Rapid Appraisal Tool as per December 2014

Appendix 2A: Word version of the WWL short questionnaire

Appendix 2B: Excel version of the WWL short questionnaire

Appendix 3: World Watch Survey

Appendix 4: Vulnerability Assessment Tool

Appendix 5A: Word version of the WWL questionnaire

Appendix 5B: Excel version of the WWL questionnaire

Appendix 6: Final ranking table (with scores) of WWL 2016

Appendix 7A: Template for the country persecution dynamics (short version)

Appendix 7B: Template for the country persecution dynamics (long version)