

World
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Mozambique: Country Dossier

December 2020



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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Introduction

World Watch List 2021

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018	Total Score WWL 2017
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	11.1	94	94	94	94	92
2	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.2	94	93	94	93	89
3	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.3	9.8	92	92	91	91	91
4	Libya	15.6	15.4	15.9	16.3	16.3	12.4	92	90	87	86	78
5	Pakistan	13.9	14.2	15.1	14.9	13.5	16.7	88	88	87	86	88
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.9	15.9	15.4	11.1	88	87	86	86	82
7	Yemen	16.6	16.6	16.5	16.7	16.7	3.9	87	85	86	85	85
8	Iran	14.5	14.5	13.9	15.7	16.5	10.6	86	85	85	85	85
9	Nigeria	13.3	13.2	13.9	14.1	14.1	16.7	85	80	80	77	78
10	India	13.0	12.9	13.5	14.9	13.7	15.4	83	83	83	81	73
11	Iraq	13.6	14.6	14.2	14.8	13.8	11.5	82	76	79	86	86
12	Syria	13.3	13.9	13.5	14.5	14.0	12.0	81	82	82	76	86
13	Sudan	13.4	13.4	13.7	13.6	15.7	9.1	79	85	87	87	87
14	Saudi Arabia	15.1	13.9	14.4	15.8	16.6	2.2	78	79	77	79	76
15	Maldives	15.4	15.5	13.9	15.8	16.6	0.4	77	78	78	78	76
16	Egypt	12.5	13.2	11.5	12.7	11.0	14.1	75	76	76	70	65
17	China	12.6	9.7	12.0	13.2	15.4	11.1	74	70	65	57	57
18	Myanmar	11.9	12.0	13.1	12.9	12.3	11.9	74	73	71	65	62
19	Vietnam	12.1	8.8	12.7	14.0	14.5	10.0	72	72	70	69	71
20	Mauritania	14.3	14.0	13.5	14.1	13.6	1.9	71	68	67	57	55
21	Uzbekistan	15.1	12.9	14.1	12.2	15.7	1.3	71	73	74	73	71
22	Laos	12.1	10.2	13.6	13.5	14.3	6.9	71	72	71	67	64
23	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.8	13.3	15.7	1.5	70	70	69	68	67
24	Algeria	13.9	13.9	11.5	13.1	13.4	3.9	70	73	70	58	58
25	Turkey	12.5	11.5	10.8	13.3	11.6	9.3	69	63	66	62	57
26	Tunisia	12.0	13.1	10.4	11.5	13.2	7.4	67	64	63	62	61
27	Morocco	12.6	13.5	11.2	12.4	14.1	3.7	67	66	63	51	49
28	Mali	9.4	8.2	12.7	10.3	11.5	15.4	67	66	68	59	59
29	Qatar	14.0	13.9	10.8	13.1	14.1	1.5	67	66	62	63	66
30	Colombia	11.4	8.8	12.4	11.0	9.7	13.9	67	62	58	56	53
31	Bangladesh	11.5	10.3	13.0	11.3	10.1	10.6	67	63	58	58	63
32	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.0	9.4	11.8	14.3	67	66	48	-	-
33	Tajikistan	14.0	12.3	11.9	12.5	13.2	2.2	66	65	65	65	58
34	Nepal	12.4	9.7	9.9	13.0	12.3	8.5	66	64	64	64	53
35	CAR	9.0	8.6	13.1	9.6	9.9	15.6	66	68	70	61	58
36	Ethiopia	9.9	8.5	10.7	10.3	10.8	14.4	65	63	65	62	64
37	Mexico	10.3	8.1	12.4	10.7	10.3	12.6	64	60	61	59	57
38	Jordan	13.1	13.9	11.4	11.6	12.4	2.0	64	64	65	66	63
39	Brunei	13.9	14.6	10.7	10.9	13.5	0.7	64	63	63	64	64
40	DRC	8.0	7.9	11.2	9.4	11.6	16.1	64	56	55	33	-
41	Kazakhstan	13.2	11.5	11.0	12.5	13.4	2.4	64	64	63	63	56
42	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.0	12.3	15.7	64	60	54	38	-
43	Bhutan	13.1	12.1	11.9	12.7	13.8	0.0	64	61	64	62	61
44	Oman	13.2	13.5	10.3	12.5	13.0	0.9	63	62	59	57	53
45	Mozambique	9.3	7.6	11.3	7.9	11.1	16.1	63	43	43	-	-
46	Malaysia	12.1	14.3	12.9	11.5	10.0	2.4	63	62	60	65	60
47	Indonesia	11.5	11.4	12.4	10.7	9.3	7.8	63	60	65	59	55
48	Kuwait	13.2	13.5	9.9	12.2	13.2	1.1	63	62	60	61	57
49	Kenya	11.7	9.2	10.5	8.0	10.3	12.8	62	61	61	62	68
50	Comoros	12.5	11.1	11.4	11.3	14.2	1.9	62	57	56	56	56

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018	Total Score WWL 2017
51	Cuba	10.9	7.7	11.8	12.9	13.4	5.4	62	52	49	49	47
52	Sri Lanka	12.2	9.1	11.7	12.2	9.7	7.0	62	65	58	57	55
53	UAE	13.4	13.3	9.7	12.0	12.4	1.1	62	60	58	58	55
54	Niger	9.4	9.5	13.3	7.2	11.6	10.6	62	60	52	45	47
55	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.3	11.2	10.4	12.0	1.3	58	57	56	54	48
56	Palestinian Territories	12.5	13.3	9.1	10.4	11.7	0.9	58	60	57	60	64
57	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	10.2	58	55	52	53	59
58	Russian Federation	12.3	8.0	10.2	10.5	12.1	3.9	57	60	60	51	46
59	Djibouti	12.3	12.3	10.3	10.0	11.2	0.0	56	56	56	56	57
60	Bahrain	12.1	12.5	9.1	10.7	10.5	0.9	56	55	55	57	54
61	Azerbaijan	12.8	9.8	9.4	11.1	12.6	0.0	56	57	57	57	52
62	Chad	11.5	8.2	10.2	9.6	10.3	3.7	53	56	48	40	-
63	Nicaragua	6.9	4.6	9.9	11.3	10.0	8.1	51	41	41	-	-
64	Burundi	5.1	5.8	9.7	9.2	9.6	8.9	48	48	43	-	-
65	Uganda	8.1	4.6	6.7	6.7	9.1	12.0	47	48	47	46	53
66	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	7.0	8.1	5.9	47	45	46	-	-
67	Honduras	6.8	5.0	10.6	7.6	9.0	7.6	46	39	38	-	-
68	Angola	6.4	3.6	7.0	10.1	11.4	7.2	46	43	42	-	-
69	South Sudan	5.7	1.5	7.0	6.3	7.8	15.0	43	44	44	-	-
70	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.3	8.8	0.6	43	43	43	-	-
71	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	9.8	0.7	43	41	42	-	-
72	Rwanda	5.3	4.4	6.7	7.8	10.1	8.1	42	42	41	-	-
73	Ivory Coast	9.8	8.6	8.2	5.5	6.6	3.3	42	42	43	-	-
74	El Salvador	6.6	4.9	9.8	4.2	8.7	7.8	42	38	30	-	-

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Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- The highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”.
- The WWL 2021 reporting period was 01 October 2019 - 30 September 2020.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

Effect on data-gathering during COVID-19 pandemic

In the WWL 2021 reporting period, travel restrictions and other measures introduced by the governments of various countries to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic did cause delays and create the need for restructuring grass-roots research in some cases. Through the agile cooperation of Open Doors field networks, research analysts, external experts and an increased use of technological options, Open Doors is confident that the WWL 2021 scoring, analysis and documentation has maintained required levels of quality and reliability.

External Links - Introduction

- Sources and definitions: World Watch List Documentation - <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>

WWL 2021 Short country profile / Mozambique

Brief country details

Mozambique: Population (2020 UN estimate)	Christians	Chr%
32,309,000	17,448,000	54.0

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed February 2020)

Mozambique: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2021	63	45
WWL 2020	43	66
WWL 2019	43	65
WWL 2018	-	-
WWL 2017	-	-

Scores and ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2017-2021 reporting periods

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Mozambique: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Islamic oppression	Violent religious groups, Organized crime cartels or networks, One's own (extended) family, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials
Ethno-religious hostility	Ethnic group leaders
Organized corruption and crime	Violent religious groups, Organized crime cartels or networks

Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.

Brief description of the persecution situation

Persecution of Christians in Mozambique is due to the following: i) Radical Islamic attacks have claimed the lives of many Christians; ii) The presence of drug cartels in some areas is making the lives of Christians - especially church youth workers - difficult; iii) The government is restricting freedom of religion.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- [7 February 2020](#): AP News reported: "Seven people were beheaded earlier this week as the armed rebels cut a swathe through the Quissanga district, heading south then east toward the Indian Ocean coast and the islands of the Quirimbas archipelago." The Islamic militants left homes, schools and clinics vandalized.
- [9 April 2020](#): Militants attacked Muambula village (Muidumbe district) on the mainland killing 5 people and causing damage to one of the oldest churches in the region as well as destroying homes of church missionaries before vandalizing a secondary school (Club of Mozambique, 13 April 2020).
- [19 May 2020](#): International Christian Concern (ICC) reported that Islamic insurgents attacked a Christian monastery located in Cabo Delgado district in northern Mozambique.
- [5 August 2020](#): Two Brazilian Roman Catholic nuns were abducted when the port of Mocímboa da Praia in northern Mozambique was attacked by jihadists (ACI Africa, 3 September 2020). They were [released unharmed](#) on 6 September 2020 (Global Sisters Report, 10 September 2020).

External Links - Short country profile

- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 7 February 2020: - <https://apnews.com/ab6f683ca655b34f893baa9caa037671>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 9 April 2020: - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-terrorists-attack-quirimba-island-aim-report-157567/>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 19 May 2020: - <https://www.persecution.org/2020/05/20/monastery-attacked-islamists-northern-mozambique/>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 5 August 2020 - <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/1929/whereabouts-of-two-brazilian-nuns-unknown-weeks-after-jihadist-attack-in-mozambique>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: released unharmed - <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/news/news/rebels-release-missionary-sisters-captured-mozambique>

WWL 2021: Keys to understanding / Mozambique

Link for general background information

- [Mozambique country profile - BBC News](#)

Recent history

After almost five centuries as a Portuguese colony, Mozambique became independent in 1975. There followed large-scale emigration, economic dependence on South Africa, a severe drought and a prolonged civil war, which all served to hinder the country's development until the mid-1990s.

The ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique party (FRELIMO) formally abandoned Marxism in 1989, and a new constitution the following year provided for multi-party elections and a free market economy. A UN-negotiated peace agreement between FRELIMO and rebel Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) forces ended the fighting in 1992. In 2004, Mozambique underwent a delicate transition as Joaquim Chissano stepped down after 18 years in office as president. His elected successor, Armando Guebuza, served two terms and then passed executive power to Filipe Nyusi in 2015.

Long considered to be a post-conflict success story, Mozambique currently finds itself in a period of uncertainty, with past political progress and current economic opportunities threatened by unresolved tensions. After a period of post-war reconstruction, the country enjoyed steady and solid economic progress. GDP growth has averaged between 7 and 8 percent for the past decade, and the discovery of significant reserves of coal and gas has driven robust foreign investment. Yet beneath strong [economic growth](#) and political progress marked by five consecutive multi-party elections, problems such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and political violence persist (World Politics Review, 21 January 2016).

Economic prosperity has been undermined since the return of political instability and violence in 2012. That year, renewed tensions between RENAMO and the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) called into question the political progress made since 1992, worrying investors and tarnishing the country's image as a post-war success story. RENAMO's residual armed forces have intermittently engaged in a low-level insurgency since 2012, although a late December 2016 ceasefire held throughout 2017. [Fighting erupted again](#) in 2019 when FRELIMO remained in power after disputed election results (All Africa, 20 April 2020).

Meanwhile, violent Islamic militants have been attacking the civilian population in the northern part of the country. Christians are heavily affected as they have been fleeing from their homes to avoid being targeted by jihadists.

Political and legal landscape

After independence in 1975, the Mozambique National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana; RENAMO) was created. Internal conflict raged throughout Mozambique from the late 1970s until 1992. Throughout this period FRELIMO remained Mozambique's sole political party. Multi-party elections began in 1994 but FRELIMO and RENAMO continue to be the major parties, alongside a handful of others. Universal suffrage was guaranteed by the 1990 Constitution. By the early 21st century, [women](#) had begun to serve in significant numbers in the Assembly of the Republic and on the Council of Ministers, and in 2004 Luisa Diogo was named prime minister - the first woman to hold the post in Mozambique (Britannica, accessed 1 September 2020).

In May 2018, parliament made steps towards greater decentralization by approving constitutional reforms allowing the indirect election of provincial governors, district administrators and mayors. In October 2019, presidential, legislative, and provincial elections were held across the country, which was the country's sixth successive general election since the introduction of multiparty elections in 1994. FRELIMO won the presidency and the national parliament. FRELIMO also secured a majority in all 10 provinces, thus electing governors for each province.

In the October 2019 presidential election, incumbent President Nyusi won with a [landslide](#) victory (France24, 27 October 2019) but opposition RENAMO rejected the result and called for [rerun](#) accusing the "government of using violence and intimidation on election day" (Al-Jazeera, 19 October 2019). However, the country's top court [dismissed](#) this (Reuters, 15 November 2019).

Religious landscape

Mozambique: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	17,448,000	54.0
Muslim	5,635,000	17.4
Hindu	47,500	0.1
Buddhist	2,600	0.0
Ethno-religionist	9,035,000	28.0
Jewish	200	0.0
Bahai	3,600	0.0

Atheist	22,300	0.1
Agnostic	110,000	0.3
Other	5,500	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed February 2020)

The South Asian immigrant population and the northern provinces are predominantly Muslim, particularly along the coast, while some areas of the northern interior have a stronger concentration of Christian communities. Christians are more numerous in the southern and central regions, but Muslims also live in these areas.

What the US State Department wrote in its [2010 International Religious Freedom Report](#) is still valid today: "Muslim journalists reported that the distinction between Sunni and Shi'a was not particularly important for many local Muslims, and Muslims were much more likely to identify themselves by the local religious leader they follow than as Sunni or Shi'a. There were significant differences between the practices of Muslims of African origin and those of South Asian background. In addition African Muslim clerics have increasingly sought training in Egypt, Kuwait, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia, returning with a more fundamental approach than the local traditional, Sufi-inspired Swahili Islam particularly common in the north."

Mozambique currently ranks at number 26 on Operation World's list of [fastest growing Evangelical populations](#) (last accessed 2 September 2020). However, many small churches that have split off from mainstream denominations have fused African indigenous beliefs and practices within a Christian framework. Some Muslim communities also continue to perform indigenous rituals.

Economic landscape

According to [World Bank's 2020 Macro Poverty Outlook](#) for sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Economic growth:** In 2019, this slowed to a 19-year low of 2.2% in 2019 as weak performance in the coal industry and the tropical cyclones dented activity. Agricultural output, which represents a fifth of GDP, also narrowed as the cyclones hit just before Mozambique's largest harvest season, resulting in a 0.4 percentage-point reduction in the sector's contribution to growth.
- **Inflation:** In 2019, inflation fell below the targeted 6% to 2.8%.
- **Poverty:** With the population growing at 2.8%, the slower economic growth contributed to increase the number of poor by over 540,000 people, despite the minimal impact on poverty headcount, which reached 61.8% in 2019 (from 61.6% in 2018).
- **Debt:** Mozambique remains in debt distress with external and public debt stocks at 99% and 118% of GDP at the end of 2019.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** A 35% drop in service imports put the current account deficit at 20.7% of GDP, down from 30.6% percent in 2018.

According to [Moody's Analytics](#), accessed 1 September 2020:

- At independence in 1975, Mozambique was one of the world's poorest countries. Socialist policies, economic mismanagement and a brutal civil war from 1977 to 1992 further impoverished the country. In 1987, the government embarked on a series of macro-economic reforms designed to stabilize the economy. In spite of improvements, about half the population remains below the poverty line and subsistence agriculture continues to employ the vast majority of the country's workforce.
- Mozambique's once substantial foreign debt was reduced through various initiatives. However, in 2016 information surfaced revealing that the Mozambican government was holding over \$2 billion in government-backed loans secured between 2012-14 by state-owned defense and security companies without parliamentary approval or national budget inclusion. This prompted the IMF and international donors to halt direct budget support to the government. An international audit was performed on Mozambique's debt in 2016-17.

According to [World Bank's 2020 Macro Poverty Outlook](#) (for sub-Saharan Africa):

- "Growth will slow to 1.1 percent in 2020, amid declining global demand for Mozambique's key exports (coal and aluminium)."
- "Social distancing measures and reduced economic activity will also affect labor incomes, especially among informal service sector workers in urban areas. This loss in earnings will increase Mozambique's poverty rate to 62 percent in 2020. Disruption in food supplies due to trade restrictions may increase food prices, with implications for the poor."
- "Growth will climb towards 4.5 percent by 2022 as LNG (Liquefied Natural gas) led investments provide added stimulus, including a boost to construction and services."
- Poverty rates are expected to remain unchanged in 2022.

Social and cultural landscape

According to [the UNDP 2019 report](#) and [World Factbook](#) (December 2019):

- **Main ethnic groups:** 99% of Mozambicans are descended from indigenous tribes such as the Makua, Tonga, Chokwe, Manyika, and Sau. There are also small European, Arabian and South Asian minorities. African 99.7%, Euro African 0.2%, Indian 0.1%, and European 0.1%
- **Main languages:** Emakhuwa 26.1%, Portuguese (official) 16.65, Xichangana 8.6%, Cinyanja 8.1%, Cisena 7.1%, Elomwe 7.1%, Echuwabo 4.7%, Cindau 3.8%, Xitswa 3.8%, other Mozambican languages 11.8%, other 0.5%, unspecified 1.8% (2017 est.). English is also spoken in major cities such as Maputo and Beira.
- **Median age:** 17.6 years
- **Urban population:** 36.0%
- **Expected years of schooling:** 9.7 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (15 years and older):** xxx
- **Employment population ratio (15 years and older):** 76.0%
- **Unemployment, total (% of labour force):** 3.2%
- **Unemployment, youth (15-24 years of age):** 6.8%

According to [UNHCR's](#) March 2020 update:

- **Refugees/IDPs:** Due to natural disasters, such as Cyclone Kenneth in April 2019, and attacks by armed groups in the north-eastern Mozambique, an estimated 156,000 villagers from nine of the province's 16 districts have been internally displaced. Also, about 12,000 children are facing issues in accessing school, according to the provincial authorities.

According to [the UN Global Human Development Indicators](#) (2019):

- **Human Development Index:** Mozambique ranked 180th out of 189 countries with a value of 0.446.
- **Average life expectancy at birth:** 60.2 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.901
- **Gender inequality index (GII):** 0.569

According to [Moody's Analytics](#) (accessed 1 September 2020):

- "Mozambique is a poor, sparsely populated country with high fertility and mortality rates. About 45% of the population is younger than 15. Mozambique's high poverty rate is caused by natural disasters, disease, high population growth, low agricultural productivity, and unequal distribution of wealth. The country's birth rate is among the world's highest, averaging more than 5 children per woman (and higher in rural areas) for at least the last three decades. The sustained high level of fertility reflects gender inequality, low contraceptive use, early marriages and childbearing, and a lack of education, particularly among women."

It is inevitable that the global crisis surrounding COVID-19 will impact the country's health and economic outlook.

Technological landscape

According to [World Internet Stats](#) (accessed 7 July 2020):

- **Internet usage:** 20.9% of the population - survey date 31 December 2019
- **Facebook usage:** 7.8% of the population – survey date 31 December 2019

According to [World Bank's Country profile](#) (2018):

- **Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 hundred people):** 47.7

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (updated 11 June 2020):

- Mobile, fixed-line and broadband penetration rates remain far below the average for the region. Mozambique had been through a war for independence and its own civil war. Thus, it is not surprising to see the country not having advanced technology and infrastructure. The communication infrastructure is developing.

According to the [World Factbook](#) (updated February 2020):

- "The mobile segment has shown strong growth given competition; poor fixed-line infrastructure means most Internet access is through mobile accounts; DSL, cable broadband, WiMAX (broadband over long distances), 3G and some fiber broadband available".

Security situation

From October 2017 onwards, there have been recurrent attacks in the north by Islamic militants who have killed many Christians and burned down Christian homes. In addition, the Islamist group *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ) has called for the removal of Christian symbols and has attacked houses belonging to Christians in some parts of Cabo Delgado Province. As many as 40 Christians were killed - including [beheadings](#) by Islamic militants (BBC News, 29 May 2018) in the WWL 2019 reporting period. An article by [The Catholic World Report](#) published in November 2018 highlights the insecurity in the country resulting from such attacks.

According to [World Bank's Country overview](#) (last updated 1 July 2020): "Recently [March 2020] the rebels attacked and occupied successively the transport hub rural town of Mocimboa da Praia and the town of Quissanga. Recent estimates show the conflict has killed more than 1,000 people and forced 100,000 from their homes. The risk that violence can spread to other areas of the country should not be underestimated."

In response to COVID-19, President Nyusi declared on 30 March 2020 a state of emergency, limiting internal movement, and partially closing borders from 1 April.

[It is reported](#) that in the period 1 January - 25 April 2020, there have been 101 violent incidents in Cabo Delgado province, which is 300% more than in the same period last year, and 285 deaths (Evangelical Focus, 8 June 2020). A selection of 2020 attacks by jihadists are listed below:

- [29 January 2020](#): Militants torched a teacher training college run by a local charity in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. Most residents fled before the group reached the village after hearing gunfire nearby (US News, 30 January 2020).
- [7 February 2020](#): 7 people were beheaded in the first week of February by Islamic militants. They left homes, schools and clinics vandalized (AP News, 7 February 2020).
- [23 March 2020](#): Islamic militants briefly occupied the center of Mocimboa da Praia, a district headquarters, burning government facilities, including barracks, and brandishing banners of IS-affiliation (The Guardian, 22 April 2020).
- [24 March 2020](#): The town of Quissanga was raided and the district police headquarters severely damaged. Those attackers too carried an IS flag. Twenty to 30 members of Mozambique's security forces were killed in the attacks on 23 and 24 March (The Guardian, 22 April 2020).
- [6 April 2020](#): An attack on Meangalewa and Muidumbe villages by Islamic militants left multiple people abducted and a church burned (International Christian Concern - ICC, 11 April 2020).

- [7 April 2020](#): 52 people were massacred in an attack by al-Shabaab Mozambique in Xitaxi located in Muidumbe district after locals refused to be recruited to its ranks (The Guardian, 22 April 2020).
- [9 April 2020](#): Militants attacked Muambula village (Muidumbe district) on the mainland killing 5 people and causing damage to one of the oldest churches in the region as well as destroying homes of church missionaries before vandalizing a secondary school (Club of Mozambique, 13 April 2020).
- [19 May 2020](#): Islamic insurgents attacked a monastery where 4 monks lived located in Cabo Delgado district in northern Mozambique. The insurgents also destroyed a hospital that the monks were building in the nearby village of Auasse (ICC, 20 May 2020).
- [3-11 June 2020](#): "Insurgents in Cabo Delgado beheaded 15 heads of families in one week in the districts of Macomia and Meluco, again sowing panic among the population after the abduction of 10 girls in the district of Mocímboa da Praia." (Club of Mozambique, 15 June 2020).
- [27 June 2020](#): An attack by the Islamic State's Central Africa Province on the town of Mocimboa da Praia left at least 40 civilians killed. The attackers also burned down a Catholic church in the town.

According to [International Crisis Group's July 2020 update](#):

"In Cabo Delgado province in far north, Islamist militants killed scores of civilians throughout month, including at least twenty in raid on Mungue village on border between Mocimboa da Praia and Muidumbe districts 15 July, and nine in attacks in Macomia and Mocimboa da Praia district 28-30 July. Numerous kidnappings were reported in July, including several truckloads of women taken by insurgents during occupation of Mocimboa da Praia town 27 June-3 July. Islamic State (ISIS) 3 July threatened to attack natural gas projects, same day warned it would target South Africa should it intervene to support Mozambican army in Cabo Delgado. Meanwhile, security forces 1 July launched raid on insurgent base near Ntessa village, Macomia district, allegedly killing over 100 militants. Reports of extrajudicial killings persisted. Security forces 7 July reportedly killed four civilians suspected of supporting insurgents in Mocimboa da Praia town. Demobilisation and disarmament of Renamo forces continued; ten former Renamo fighters 6 July enrolled with police in Pemba, capital of Cabo Delgado province; UN Special Envoy for Mozambique Mirko Manzoni 16 July said Renamo base in Muxungue, Sofala province in centre, had been dismantled previous day and over 500 former Renamo fighters demobilised since June, reportedly including eleven members of Renamo dissident faction which calls itself Renamo Military Junta."

Trends analysis

1) FRELIMO remains in power

Research over the last years has shown i) that Mozambique has been struggling with corruption and drug cartels; ii) that the country has been struggling to keep peace with the opposition RENAMO; iii) that Mozambique has been struggling to uphold its commitment to international human rights. In the country's general election that was held in October 2019, FRELIMO won a landslide victory, including the presidency, parliamentary seats and ten governorships. There have now been six successive elections with the participation of opposition parties and - despite certain limitations - this shows that the country is now moving away from its history of civil war and the leaders are taking the voting public seriously. This is a positive sign, although the limitations need improving.

2) The Islamic insurgency is growing

The level of fear among Christians is rising due to the growing influence of the Islamist group *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ), especially in the north of the country. There is a danger that the influence of these militants will increase and spread to other parts of Mozambique. The government of Mozambique may well need to request assistance from other countries to help fight this insurgency before it reaches the scale of Somalia's al-Shabaab or Nigeria's Boko Haram. The Islamic State group also warned South Africa not to interfere in Mozambique politics especially regarding the ongoing Islamic insurgency in the country. In 2019 and 2020, the jihadist group has become more potent and even managed to control a port at one point. If this trend continues, it can also create problems for Tanzania. There have already been reports of armed groups crossing the border into Tanzania and killing people.

External Links - Keys to understanding

- Link for general background information: Mozambique country profile - BBC News - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13890416>
- Recent history: economic growth - <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/17725/political-tensions-threaten-mozambique-s-tenuous-peace>
- Recent history: Fighting - <https://allafrica.com/stories/201405170059.html>
- Recent history: erupted again - <https://allafrica.com/stories/201405170059.html>
- Political and legal landscape: women - <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mozambique/Political-process>
- Political and legal landscape: landslide - <https://www.france24.com/en/20191027-mozambique-s-president-nyusi-wins-second-term-opposition-rejects-results>
- Political and legal landscape: rerun - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/mozambique-opposition-rejects-election-results-191019135525946.html>
- Political and legal landscape: dismissed - <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1XP0WD-OZATP>
- Religious landscape description: 2010 International Religious Freedom Report - <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148708.htm>
- Religious landscape description: fastest growing Evangelical populations - <http://www.operationworld.org/print/559>
- Economic landscape: World Bank's 2020 Macro Poverty Outlook - <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/720441492455091991/mpo-ssa.pdf>
- Economic landscape: Moody's Analytics - <https://www.economy.com/mozambique/>
- Economic landscape: World Bank's 2020 Macro Poverty Outlook - <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/720441492455091991/mpo-ssa.pdf>
- Social and cultural landscape: the UNDP 2019 report - <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MOZ>

- Social and cultural landscape: World Factbook - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/attachments/summaries/MZ-summary.pdf>
- Social and cultural landscape: UNHCR's - <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/75077>
- Social and cultural landscape: the UN Global Human Development Indicators - <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MOZ>
- Social and cultural landscape: Moody's Analytics - <https://www.economy.com/mozambique/>
- Technological landscape: World Internet Stats - <https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#bf>
- Technological landscape: World Bank's Country profile - https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&id=b450fd57&tbar=y&dd=y&inf=n&zm=n&country=MOZ
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Mozambique-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses>
- Technological landscape: World Factbook - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mz.html>
- Technological landscape: - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mz.html>
- Security situation: beheadings - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-44289512>
- Security situation: The Catholic World Report - <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2018/11/29/new-islamist-violence-in-mozambique-worries-countrys-catholic-bishops/>
- Security situation: World Bank's Country overview - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mozambique/overview>
- Security situation: It is reported - <https://evangelicalfocus.com/world/6266/jihadism-a-growing-reality-in-mozambique>
- Security situation: 29 January 2020: - <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-01-30/college-burned-in-militant-attack-in-northern-mozambique>
- Security situation: 7 February 2020: - <https://apnews.com/ab6f683ca655b34f893baa9caa037671>
- Security situation: 23 March 2020: - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/22/islamist-group-kills-52-in-cruel-and-diabolical-mozambique-massacre>
- Security situation: 24 March 2020: - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/22/islamist-group-kills-52-in-cruel-and-diabolical-mozambique-massacre>
- Security situation: 6 April 2020: - <https://www.persecution.org/2020/04/11/mozambique-suffers-jihadist-attacks/>
- Security situation: 7 April 2020: - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/22/islamist-group-kills-52-in-cruel-and-diabolical-mozambique-massacre>
- Security situation: 9 April 2020: - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-terrorists-attack-quirimba-island-aim-report-157567/>
- Security situation: 19 May 2020: - <https://www.persecution.org/2020/05/20/monastery-attacked-islamists-northern-mozambique/>
- Security situation: 3 -11 June 2020: - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-15-heads-of-families-murdered-10-girls-kidnapped-in-cabo-delgado-voa-163063/>
- Security situation: 27 June 2020 - <https://observers.france24.com/en/20200731-investigation-thousands-flee-Islamic-insurgents-Mozambique>
- Security situation: International Crisis Group's July 2020 update - https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=125&date_range=latest&from_month=01&from_year=2020&to_month=01&to_year=2020

WWL 2021: Church information / Mozambique

Christian origins

Christianity was introduced to Mozambique by Roman Catholic Dominicans in 1506. Jesuit and Augustinian monks later helped the Dominicans in establishing the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique. In 1881 Protestant Christianity came to Mozambique through missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. As a result of the Berlin Treaty of 1885, the authorities became more open to admitting non-Catholic missionary personnel. In 1889, Bishop William Taylor of the Methodist Episcopal Church moved to the country.

Church spectrum today

Mozambique: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	5,000	0.0
Catholic	7,300,000	41.8
Protestant	4,675,000	26.8
Independent	4,500,000	25.8
Unaffiliated	1,200,000	6.9
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-232,000	-1.3
Total	17,448,000	100.0
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	4,200,000	24.1
Renewalist movement	6,000,000	34.4

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed February 2020)

Orthodox: Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox. **Roman Catholics:** All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. **Protestants:** Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world's 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics. **Independents:** Christians who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant). **Unaffiliated Christians:** Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches. **Doubly-affiliated Christians:** Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once. **Evangelical movement:** Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls. **Renewalist movement:** Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.

According to the US State Department's [2019 IRF report](#) there are Roman Catholic, "Zionist Christian", Evangelical, Pentecostal and Anglican churches (in descending order of denominational size) in the country.

External Links - Church information

- Church spectrum today - additional information: 2019 IRF report - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/mozambique/>

WWL 2021: Persecution Dynamics / Mozambique

Reporting period

01 October 2019 - 30 September 2020

Position on the World Watch List

Mozambique: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2021	63	45
WWL 2020	43	66
WWL 2019	43	65
WWL 2018	-	-
WWL 2017	-	-

Scores and ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2017-2021 reporting periods

Mozambique rose 20 points in score in WWL 2021 and entered the WWL Top 50. In recent years, radical Islamic attacks have claimed the lives of many Christians. The IS-affiliated Islamist group, *ahl-Sunnah wa Jama'ah (ASWJ)*, wants to establish an Islamic caliphate in Mozambique and has committed numerous atrocities. It has burned down churches and schools and tens of thousands of people have fled to the northern part of the country. The country's army withdrew from important strategic locations including a port at one point. Thus, a persecution phenomenon that was limited to a smaller part of the country expanded in the WWL 2021 reporting period. Furthermore, the presence of drug cartels in some areas is making the lives of Christians difficult - especially for church youth workers.

Persecution engines

Mozambique: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Strong
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Medium
Clan oppression	CO	Not at all
Christian Denominational protectionism	CDP	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Medium

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

Islamic oppression (Strong):

Islam is a minority-religion in Mozambique with main [centers](#) in the north (Pew Forum, accessed 1 December 2020). From October 2017 onwards, there have been recurrent attacks against Christians by Islamic militants, causing thousands of residents to flee their homes. In 2019 and 2020, jihadists have continued attacking churches and Christians, as well as government installations and other civilians. The capability and areas of influence of these militants is increasing everyday. If this continues, it is likely to expand south and also into neighboring Tanzania.

Ethno-religious hostility (Medium):

In some remote areas, adherents to the indigenous belief system see the rise in Christian evangelistic activities as a threat. As a result, community leaders often complain about such church action.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium):

Although the Constitution declares the nation to be secular, it also protects the right to practice or not practice religion. Political parties are prohibited from using names containing expressions that are directly related to any religious denominations or churches, and from using emblems that may be confused with national or religious symbols. Moreover, the Constitution bans all

religious influence in public educational institutions. Some authorities also impose cumbersome registration requirements for religious groups.

Organized corruption and crime (Medium):

Mozambique faces a very significant problem with organized crime. Drugs, illegal wildlife products such as ivory and illegal arms are widely traded at ports. The Islamist group al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah has been involved in this illegal trade to fund the group's activities. The thriving drug business affects Christian communities where threats are issued and acts of violence take place, especially where Christian missionaries evangelize among the youth and among groups involved in the supply or use of drugs.

Drivers of persecution

Mozambique: Drivers of persecution per engine									
	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	STRONG	-	MEDIUM	-	WEAK	-	-	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Government officials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Medium	-
Ethnic group leaders	-	-	Medium	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Christian religious leaders	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Religious leaders of other churches	-	-	-	-	Weak	-	-	-	-
Violent religious groups	Very strong	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Medium
Ideological pressure groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium	-	Weak	-	Weak	-	-	-	-
One's own (extended) family	Medium	-	Weak	-	Weak	-	-	-	-
Political parties	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Organized crime cartels or networks	Medium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Medium
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

Drivers of Islamic oppression:

- **Violent religious groups (Very strong):** Violent Islamic militants are the major drivers of persecution. They are believed to have strong ties with al-Shabaab in Somalia and to be followers of a strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam.
- **Organized crime cartels/networks (Medium):** Islamic militants are supported financially by working with drug cartels and through corruption involving some officials in the country.
- **Family (Medium):** In Muslim-dominated areas and in Muslim families, those who convert to Christianity face ostracization and discrimination.
- **Ordinary citizens (Medium):** All Christian groups in Muslim majority areas can face persecution from ordinary citizens and mobs. This is particularly true in the northern part of the country.

Drivers of Ethno-religious hostility:

- **Ethnic leaders (Medium):** In Mozambique, there are still certain groups who follow the traditional belief system and or mix it with Christianity and Islam. The drivers are clan leaders (sometimes overlapping with non-Christian religious leaders).

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia:

- **Government officials (Medium):** The government of Mozambique is not a true democracy. It is still repressive in many respects. It puts pressure on some church leaders and congregations to support government policies. It restricts freedom of association and freedom of expression.

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime:

- **Organized crime cartels and networks (Medium):** These groups threaten churches where these are involved in work among youth and criminal gangs. The country is also struggling to deal with the drug networks in the country.
- **Violent religious groups (Medium):** The stronger the Islamist groups become, the more Christians will be persecuted in Mozambique - as can be seen in the cases of Boko Haram and al-Shabaab elsewhere.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The persecution of Christians is severest in the northern Cabo Delgado Province due to IS-affiliated militants carrying out violent attacks there.

Map of country



Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians:

Expatriate Christians are not isolated from other Christian communities in Mozambique and are thus not treated as a separate category in WWL analysis.

Historical Christian communities:

This category includes Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches. They are frequently targeted by *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* militants.

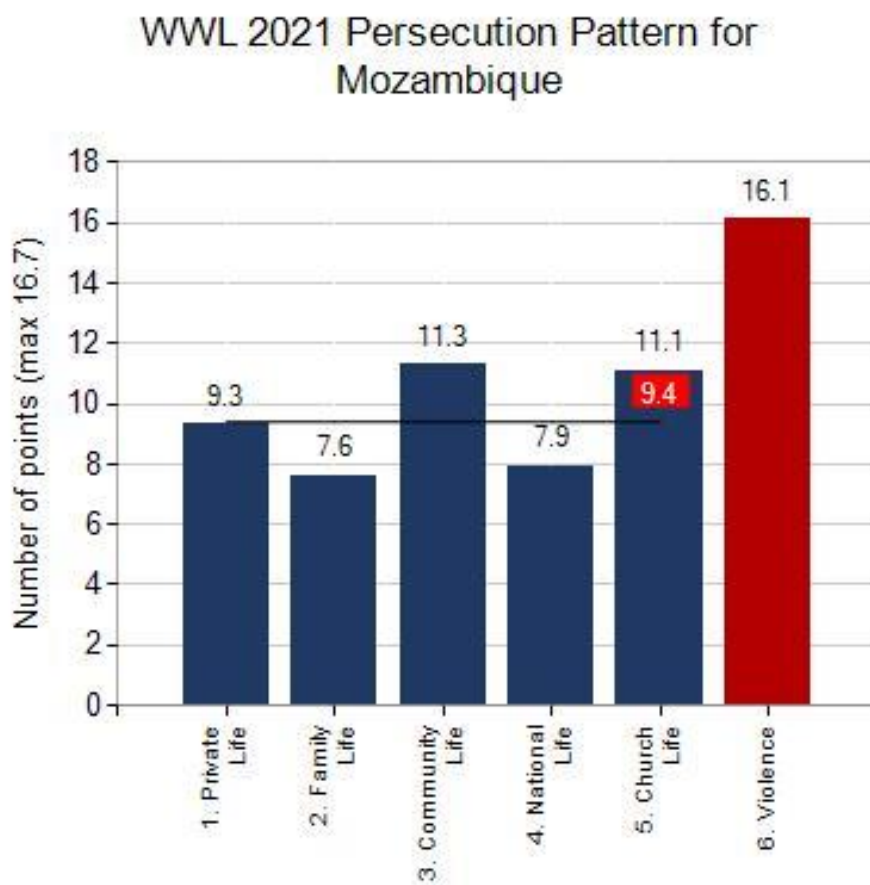
Converts:

This category includes converts from Islam or traditional African religions to Christianity and also "cross-denominational converts" among Christian groups. Persecution is particularly severe if the convert is from a Muslim background living in the Muslim-dominated northern part of the country and such converts are likely to be targets for attack by radical Muslims.

Non-traditional Christian communities:

This category includes Baptist, Pentecostal and various independent Christian groups. Due to their focus on outreach and evangelism, Christians in these churches are regularly threatened and attacked.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2021 Persecution pattern for Mozambique shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Mozambique is 9.4, an increase from 6.4 points in WWL 2020).
- Of the levels of pressure in the five *spheres of life*, the score in the *Community sphere* is highest with 11.3 points followed by the *Church sphere* with 11.1 points. This is an indication that church and community life in the northern part of the country is being highly affected by the jihadist movement.

- The score for violence is at the extreme level of 16.1 points, rising from 11.7 points in WWL 2020. This increase reflects the significant numbers of killings and the destruction of churches and Christian homes.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2021 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.75 points)

Christians in areas under the influence of Islamists have to make sure that their faith is not known. This is particularly the case for converts from a Muslim background.

Block 1.5: It has been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols. (2.75 points)

In the northern part of the country, Christians need to be wary of advertising their faith through displaying crosses etc. as these can attract attacks. In the WWL 2021 reporting period, jihadists have been going house-to-house in villages and burning schools, homes and churches.

Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (2.50 points)

In the northern part of the country, Christians have to be very careful. Faith-related activities such as sharing online images, blogging about faith, or chatting about faith issues with family members or others, can land Christians in very serious trouble.

Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (2.50 points)

In northern areas, there have been brutal killings and there is a high risk involved in Christians meeting up.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.9: Children of Christians have been harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' faith. (3.25 points)

In the context of the ongoing jihadist expansion in the country, parents and their children are victims of harassment and discrimination in the community and schools in the northern part of the country. Furthermore, in some areas where the Catholics are dominant children of evangelicals face similar challenges.

Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (3.00 points)

This is the case both in Muslim dominated areas (affecting all Christian groups) and non-Catholics in other areas. Any baptism has to be carried out without drawing attention.

Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (2.75 points)

For Christians in the northern part of the county, celebrating a wedding (Christian) could provoke an attack from Islamist groups.

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (2.50 points)

For Christian parents, raising their children in Christian faith is dangerous where jihadist groups have become influential in society, particularly in areas where government forces have been forced to withdraw.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (3.75 points)

Where jihadists and their cells have influence, it has created an environment of fear among Christians who keep a low profile as a result. In other areas of Mozambique, where the Roman Catholic Church is dominant, Christians from other denominations often find they are discriminated against.

Block 3.3: Christians have been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage. (3.50 points)

Christian women and girls are under threat of abduction by Islamist insurgents in the north of Mozambique. There have been a number of instances where girls are abducted after the insurgents raid villages. For example:

[May 2020](#): An unknown number of girls were kidnapped. Two of them who had been kidnapped from Ulo, a village in Mocimbo de Praia in Cabo Delgado, managed to escape the insurgent camp where they said women and girls were made to sleep naked to stop them escaping. (Zitamar News, 19 May 2020).

[June 2020](#): 10 girls were abducted while fleeing jihadist attacks on Mocímboa da Praia on 11 June 2020. (Club of Mozambique, 15 June 2020).

[July 2020](#): 11 women and girls were abducted on 23-25 July 2020 in Manica village, in the administrative post of Mucojo, Macomia district. One woman was even forced to leave her newborn son. (Club of Mozambique, 31 July 2020).

Block 3.1: Christians have been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (e.g. for not meeting majority religion or traditional dress codes, beard codes etc.). (3.25 points)

The threat to Christians is increasing in the Cabo Delgado Province. A country expert noted: "Christians in Cabo Delgado Province in the north of Mozambique have faced harassment for not meeting Muslim religious standard requirements as perceived by the Islamist insurgents. Violence by the Islamist insurgents has also been taking a new face, that of attacking churches and Christians directly, that is singling out Christians in a group and even forcing them to renounce their faith. Such acts are seen as a threat to Christians and have forced many people to flee from their homes in various villages in the province of Cabo Delgado."

Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.25 points)

This affects Christians in areas where jihadists are active or potentially present through its cells.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

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

This issue is a delicate matter. There has not been a general tendency of hindering political parties in their functioning because of Christian convictions. However, where religious leaders or prominent Christians have been vocal against the government they face obstruction. An example can be seen in the [US State Department's 2017 IRF report](#): "In July President Filipe Nyusi questioned the line between religion and politics during a visit to the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional, and Religious Affairs, saying, 'I would not like the religion of my country to be confused with politics... But if the new way of doing religion is this, we will have difficulties, as a country, reaching a conclusion.' Journalists said the remarks were intended to send a message to churches that had taken positions on political issues and were prompted by the Catholic bishops' stand on the country's 'hidden' debt, referring to a debt scandal involving large, undeclared loans to state-owned companies."

Block 4.4: Christians have been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)

There is a security threat in the north of the country, where jihadists have carried out many abductions. This threat is expanding to other parts of the country.

Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.00 points)

The government will hinder unwelcome church views on public issues. A country expert noted: "The church played a significant role in the democratization process in the post-colonial era in Mozambique and continues to play a key role in brokering peace deals in the country where it is so needed. However, it is now apparent that the government does not welcome church

interference when it comes to voicing out concerns over human rights violations. This is seen through the move by the government to try and create a stricter form of control over religion and worship through the dialogue for enactment of a new bill, the dialogue for which has begun mid 2020."

Block 4.12: Christians, churches or Christian organizations have been hindered in publicly displaying religious symbols. (3.00 points)

This is becoming a challenge for many Christians in the northern part of the country. Many churches and church symbols have been vandalized.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.25 points)

Two aspects: First, Christian preaching is often monitored by the authorities for signs of any criticism of the government; secondly, jihadists monitor all church activity in the northern part of the country.

Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (3.25 points)

The government has been deliberately slow in issuing licenses and, in 2020, it drafted a new law to regulate religious affairs. It appears to be similar to what is being practiced in Rwanda – the government want officially trained church leaders and want to avoid a proliferation of smaller church groups.

Block 5.4: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities inside their place of worship. (3.25 points)

Organizing in-church activities has been difficult in the northern part of the country due to the likelihood of attacks by Islamic militants. For example, on [7 April 2020](#), an Islamist group coordinated an attack in Meangalewa, located in the administrative post of Chitunda, in Muidumbe, where they destroyed a church (Club of Mozambique, 8 April 2020).

Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.25 points)

A country expert stated: "The organization of church activities outside of church buildings has been hindered in the Cabo Delgado Province due to the fear looming in the area that Christians are likely to be subject to attack."

Violence

Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible. Since many incidents go unreported, the numbers below must be understood as being minimum figures. In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10, 100 or 1000) is given. (A symbolic number of 10 could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100 could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1000 could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain.) In cases where it is clear that (many) more Christians are affected, but a concrete number could be given according to the number of incidents reported, the number given has to be understood as being an absolutely minimum figure. The symbol “x” denotes a known number which cannot be published due to security considerations.

Mozambique: Violence Block question	WWL 2021	WWL 2020
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	100	12
6.2 How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10	5
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	10	0
6.4 How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5 How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	50	0
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	10	10
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	10	10
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	1000	100
6.9 How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	1000	100
6.10 How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	100	100

6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	1000	10
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	10	0

5 Year trends

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

5 Year trends: Average pressure

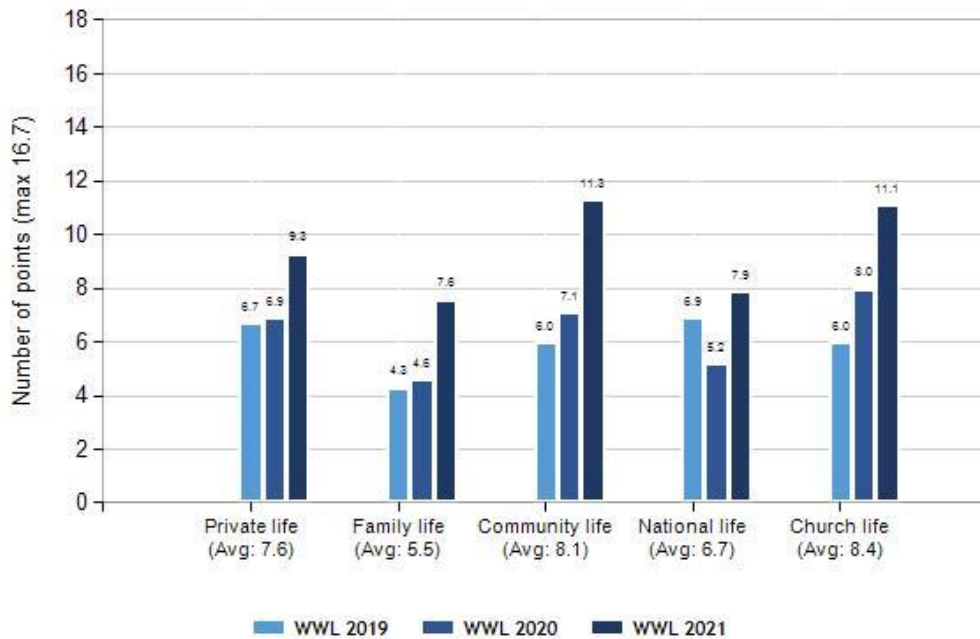
Mozambique: WWL 2017 - WWL 2021 Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2021	9.4
2020	6.4
2019	6.0
2018	No data
2017	No data

The average pressure has been steadily climbing over the past three reporting periods which shows that the situation for Christians in Mozambique is getting more challenging. The increase in 3 points from WWL 2020 to WWL 2021 is an indication that the areas where Christians face difficulties are expanding and the intensity as well as frequency of pressure on Christians is increasing.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life

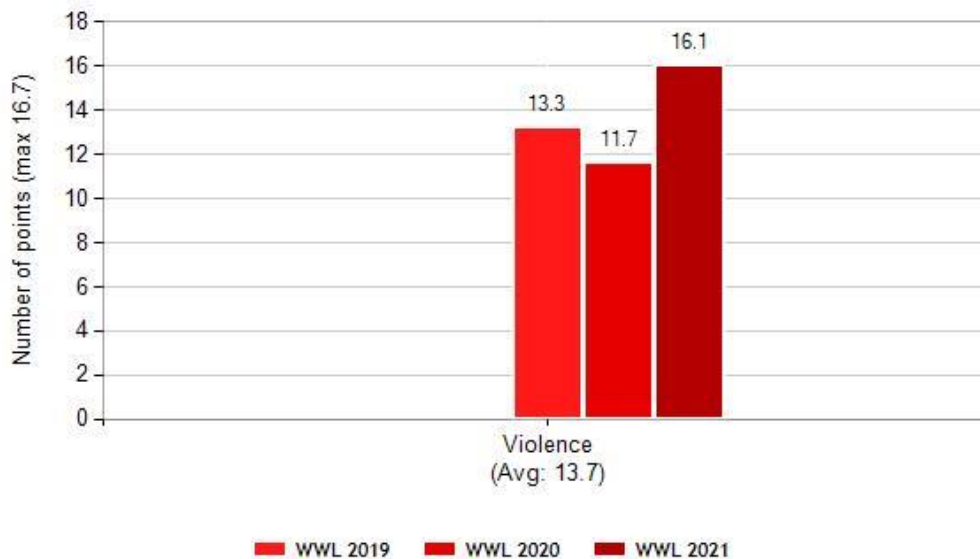
As can be seen in the chart below, the average pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* (8.4 points) followed by the *Community sphere* (8.1 points). This is characteristic of persecution driven by jihadists. Churches are being targeted and Christians struggle to hold services and events inside and outside their church premises.

WWL 2019 - WWL 2021 Persecution Pattern for Mozambique
(Spheres of life)



5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

WWL 2019 - WWL 2021 Persecution Pattern for Mozambique
(Violence)



The chart above shows that violence is at an extreme level with an average of 13.7 points over the last three reporting periods. The sharp increase of 4.4 points in WWL 2021 is consistent with the rising levels of violence targeting Christians in the northern part of the country.

Gender-specific religious persecution Female

Female Pressure Points
Abduction
Denied custody of children
Denied inheritance or possessions
Discrimination/harassment via education
Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Forced divorce
Forced marriage
Trafficking
Violence – physical
Violence – psychological
Violence – sexual

According to local sources, the most common violations affecting Christian women and girls in the country are sexual harassment and rape – attributed to the incursion of Islamic militants - and forced marriage to militants. Mozambique has one of the highest rates of early marriage in the world, with [53% of girls](#) being married before they reach 18 (Girls Not Brides), fuelled by low education and employment opportunities for women and girls. Victims of forced marriage and rape have been psychologically and emotionally traumatized by these events.

Abduction is also commonly used as a tool for violating rights of freedom. As a country expert observed, “it is becoming a chronic issue.” During the WWL 2021 reporting period there have been numerous reports of abductions across areas of the country where jihadists and their cells exert influence. In addition to marriage, girls are also used for forced labor. The practice of viewing women more or less as domestic slaves and tools of sexuality has fuelled the abduction of women by insurgents to use for sex as well as domestic chores.

Converts from a Muslim or African Traditional Religion background are also vulnerable to persecution from within the family sphere. Many Muslim families living in Mozambique force suspected female converts to marry a Muslim man to ensure that they cannot get involved in Christian activities. If already married, converts face the threats of divorce and the loss of custody of their children. They may also be denied their due inheritance.

Gender-specific religious persecution Male

Male Pressure Points
Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Military/militia conscription/service against conscience
Violence – death
Violence – physical

According to country experts, *Islamic oppression* is the most common form of persecution for Christians in Mozambique. One shared that “attacks that target both government and Christian properties have become common in the province where the jihadists are active.”

It is reported that Christian men and boys have been killed in these attacks, or have lost their farmland and properties, leaving their families economically crippled. Young boys have also been forcibly recruited into militias; In early 2020 more than 50 young boys were reportedly massacred for refusing to join rebel groups.

Persecution of other religious minorities

According to the [US State Department’s IRF 2019 report](#):

"Civil society and religious organizations conducted outreach to promote religious tolerance during the year. In August, COREM, a faith-based NGO whose stated purpose was to encourage constructive dialogue and interaction among religious groups, hosted its second annual National Summit on Peace and Reconciliation. The summit focused on the recent peace agreements, and the role of women and religious groups in the peace process."

Other religious minorities (such as Hindus, Buddhists and Jews) are very few in number in the country and most are expatriates. There is no specific form of persecution affecting these groups. A significant number of the population still follow traditional African religions. Most adherents live in remote parts of the country and there are no reports of persecution. Many are converting to Christianity.

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Islamic oppression:

ASWJ is one of the newest jihadist groups in Africa. Emerging in 2017, it has made international headlines by beheading Christians and attacking government security forces and installations. The government's counter-insurgency measures are described as heavy-handed, which is actually helping boost jihadist recruitment. If the jihadists continue their growth and success achieved in the WWL 2021 reporting period (with the government losing ground), it is very likely

that the conflict could expand further south and to the neighboring country of Tanzania. If the government cannot introduce a more comprehensive strategy, it is likely that this Persecution engine will become stronger.

Ethno-religious hostility:

This Persecution engine is likely to continue in the short-term. However, in the long-term, it is likely that through the influence of education, political inclusion and more democracy, ethnic groups will become more open to outside ideas and more tolerant of Christians in their areas.

Dictatorial paranoia:

In the October 2019 election, FRELIMO was declared the winner but RENAMO rejected the result. This fragile country has seen so many conflicts and humanitarian crises and any attempt by the ruling party to become more authoritarian can only invite another conflict. Nevertheless, if democracy can become established, then this Persecution engine will fade away (probably then being taken place by *Secular intolerance*).

Organized corruption and crime:

The government is currently having little success in tackling the problem of organized crime. With the lack of good governance and the existence of drug cartels and increasing Islamic militant involvement, this Persecution engine looks set to become stronger in the future.

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines description: centers - http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/mozambique#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010®ion_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016%20
- Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere: May 2020: - <https://zitamar.com/escaped-girls-describe-insurgent-camp-under-dense-tree-cover-in-cabo-delgado/>
- Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere: June 2020: - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-15-heads-of-families-murdered-10-girls-kidnapped-in-cabo-delgado-voa-163063/>
- Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere: July 2020: - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/eleven-more-women-and-girls-kidnapped-in-macomia-carta-167586/>
- Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere: US State Department's 2017 IRF report - <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Mozambique-2.pdf>
- Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere: 7 April 2020 - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-armed-groups-attack-in-cabo-delgado-157170/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: 53% of girls - <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/mozambique/>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: US State Department's IRF 2019 report: - <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MOZAMBIQUE-2019-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>

Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on World Watch Research's Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) and on the World Watch Monitor website:

- <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
e.g. [Mozambique Islamic militancy – July 2020](#)
- <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Mozambique>
- <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/Mozambique>