

World
Watch
Research

Uzbekistan: Full Country Dossier

December 2021



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

December 2021

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Woman in Bukhara, Uzbekistan (c) Alamy

Introduction

World Watch List 2022

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018
1	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	15.0	98	94	93	94	93
2	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	13.1	96	94	94	94	94
3	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.5	91	92	92	91	91
4	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.2	16.3	11.5	91	92	90	87	86
5	Yemen	16.7	16.6	16.5	16.7	16.7	5.2	88	87	85	86	85
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.6	11.1	88	88	87	86	86
7	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.3	14.5	14.4	16.7	87	85	80	80	77
8	Pakistan	13.6	14.0	15.1	14.9	13.1	16.7	87	88	88	87	86
9	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.6	15.8	16.5	10.4	85	86	85	85	85
10	India	12.7	12.7	12.9	14.7	13.3	15.6	82	83	83	83	81
11	Saudi Arabia	15.1	15.1	15.0	15.9	16.7	3.1	81	78	79	77	79
12	Myanmar	12.4	11.5	13.8	13.4	13.1	14.8	79	74	73	71	65
13	Sudan	13.4	13.4	14.3	13.6	15.7	8.5	79	79	85	87	87
14	Iraq	14.0	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	6.9	78	82	76	79	86
15	Syria	12.9	13.8	13.5	14.3	13.9	9.3	78	81	82	82	76
16	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.7	15.8	16.5	0.4	77	77	78	78	78
17	China	12.6	9.8	12.2	14.4	15.5	11.1	76	74	70	65	57
18	Qatar	14.2	14.1	11.1	13.0	14.3	7.2	74	67	66	62	63
19	Vietnam	11.3	9.7	12.7	14.1	14.5	8.7	71	72	72	70	69
20	Egypt	12.7	13.2	11.5	12.7	10.8	10.0	71	75	76	76	70
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	14.1	11.8	15.6	1.7	71	71	73	74	73
22	Algeria	14.0	14.0	11.1	13.4	14.1	4.1	71	70	73	70	58
23	Mauritania	14.3	13.9	13.1	14.0	14.1	0.9	70	71	68	67	57
24	Mali	9.4	8.2	13.9	10.3	12.8	15.0	70	67	66	68	59
25	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	13.3	15.7	0.6	69	70	70	69	68
26	Laos	12.0	10.3	13.2	13.3	14.1	5.9	69	71	72	71	67
27	Morocco	13.1	13.8	10.8	12.8	14.2	3.9	69	67	66	63	51
28	Indonesia	11.3	11.5	11.5	11.0	9.6	13.5	68	63	60	65	59
29	Bangladesh	11.8	10.7	12.9	11.3	10.2	11.3	68	67	63	58	58
30	Colombia	11.5	8.8	13.1	11.0	9.9	13.3	68	67	62	58	56
31	CAR	9.0	8.6	13.6	9.6	11.4	15.6	68	66	68	70	61
32	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.0	9.6	12.1	14.8	68	67	66	48	-
33	Niger	9.4	9.5	13.9	7.2	12.8	14.8	68	62	60	52	45
34	Bhutan	13.4	12.4	11.7	13.7	13.8	1.7	67	64	61	64	62
35	Tunisia	11.9	12.7	10.6	11.3	13.4	6.5	66	67	64	63	62
36	Oman	13.8	14.0	10.3	13.2	13.4	1.5	66	63	62	59	57
37	Cuba	12.3	8.1	12.6	13.2	14.0	5.9	66	62	52	49	49
38	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.3	12.3	9.8	66	65	63	65	62
39	Jordan	12.9	14.0	11.0	12.3	12.5	3.0	66	64	64	65	66
40	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	12.0	15.6	66	64	56	55	33
41	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	11.3	7.9	12.5	15.6	65	63	43	43	-
42	Turkey	12.6	11.5	11.4	13.2	11.6	4.6	65	69	63	66	62
43	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	10.8	10.3	12.6	65	64	60	61	59
44	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.4	65	64	60	54	38
45	Tajikistan	13.8	12.3	12.0	12.6	13.2	0.7	65	66	65	65	65
46	Brunei	14.8	14.5	10.3	11.0	13.2	0.6	64	64	63	63	64
47	Kazakhstan	13.4	11.6	11.1	12.6	13.5	1.7	64	64	64	63	63
48	Nepal	12.4	9.8	9.9	13.6	12.7	5.2	64	66	64	64	64
49	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	63	62	60	61
50	Malaysia	12.5	14.3	11.5	11.6	10.2	3.3	63	63	62	60	65

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018
51	Kenya	11.7	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	11.1	63	62	61	61	62
52	Sri Lanka	12.9	9.9	11.4	11.3	9.4	7.8	63	62	65	58	57
53	Comoros	12.7	11.1	11.2	12.4	14.2	0.9	63	62	57	56	56
54	UAE	13.4	13.6	10.1	11.8	12.2	1.3	62	62	60	58	58
55	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	13.7	61	58	55	52	53
56	Azerbaijan	13.1	9.9	9.3	11.0	13.4	3.3	60	56	57	57	57
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.4	9.8	10.2	12.0	0.9	59	58	60	57	60
58	Djibouti	12.3	12.3	11.1	10.0	12.2	0.7	59	56	56	56	56
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.1	11.1	10.4	12.0	1.5	58	58	57	56	54
60	Bahrain	12.5	13.2	9.1	11.1	10.2	0.9	57	56	55	55	57
61	Nicaragua	9.1	5.6	11.1	11.8	11.3	7.6	56	51	41	41	-
62	Russian Federation	12.3	8.0	10.2	10.6	12.3	2.2	56	57	60	60	51
63	Chad	11.5	8.2	10.2	9.6	10.3	5.6	55	53	56	48	40
64	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.7	9.2	9.6	8.1	52	48	48	43	-
65	Venezuela	5.6	4.5	11.2	9.4	11.1	9.6	51	39	42	41	34
66	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	10.1	11.4	7.8	51	46	43	42	-
67	Rwanda	8.1	5.5	6.7	10.3	10.1	9.3	50	42	42	41	-
68	Honduras	7.2	5.1	10.5	7.7	9.2	8.7	48	46	39	38	-
69	Uganda	8.1	4.6	7.4	6.7	9.1	11.7	48	47	48	47	46
70	El Salvador	7.7	4.6	10.7	5.7	9.1	7.2	45	42	38	30	-
71	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	9.8	2.4	44	43	41	42	-
72	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.3	8.8	1.7	44	43	43	43	-
73	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	7.0	8.1	2.0	43	47	45	46	-
74	South Sudan	5.7	0.9	7.0	6.3	7.8	15.0	43	43	44	44	-
75	Ivory Coast	9.8	8.6	8.2	5.5	7.9	2.0	42	42	42	43	-
76	Israel	9.8	8.4	5.6	6.6	6.6	4.3	41	40	38	39	40

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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).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the “Keys to Understanding” chapter under the heading “Links for general background information”. Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2022 reporting period was 01 October 2020 - 30 September 2021.
- 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 2022 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 In-country networks, Open Doors country researchers, External experts, WWR analysts and an increased use of technological options, Open Doors is confident that – as in the previous reporting period – WWL 2022 scoring, analysis and documentation has maintained required levels of quality and reliability.

External Links - Introduction

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

WWL 2022 Situation in brief / Uzbekistan

Brief country details

Uzbekistan: Population (UN estimate for 2021)	Christians	Chr%
33,649,000	347,000	1.0

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

Map of country



Uzbekistan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	71	21
WWL 2021	71	21
WWL 2020	73	18
WWL 2019	74	17
WWL 2018	73	16

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2018-2022 reporting periods

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

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

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

Brief description of the persecution situation

All categories of Christian communities are experiencing some form of pressure and violence on grounds of their faith. Russian Orthodox churches experience the least problems from the government as they do not usually attempt to make contact with the Uzbek population. It is the indigenous Christians with a Muslim background who are bearing the brunt of persecution both at the hands of the state and from family, friends and community. Where churches have not been registered, Christians suffer repeatedly from police raids, threats, arrests and fines.

Summary of international obligations and rights violations

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

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

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

- Christians are killed for their faith (ICCPR Art. 6)
- Churches from non-traditional denominations are raided, services disrupted and attenders arbitrarily arrested (ICCPR Arts. 9; 18 and 21)
- Ownership and consultation of religious literature is severely restricted beyond international permitted limitations (ICCPR Arts. 18 and 19)
- Christians and their activities are monitored by the authorities and surrounding community (ICCPR Art. 17)
- Christian female converts run the risk of being abducted and forcibly married to Muslim men (ICCPR Art. 23; CEDAW Art. 16 and ICESCR Art. 10)

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

This year saw no reports of violent incidents in the media. Other sources provided information, but due to security reasons no specifics can be given.

- December 2020: Tatyana Akhmadiyeva was arrested after a police raid uncovered religious materials. These were confiscated and she was later fined the equivalent of two weeks' wages.
- The house of a Christian family was burned down by the Muslim community in a village. The family was out at the time, but all property was destroyed.
- At least 64 converts faced kinds of pressure and violence (including physical and mental abuse) in family, community, work and education. The majority of reported cases took place in the converts' families, e.g. beatings, threats, forced isolation etc.

Specific examples of positive developments

Very few positive reports were received from Uzbekistan during the WWL 2022 reporting period.

New staff at Roman Catholic church in Samarkand: "After spending 8 years on a mission in Kazakhstan, Fr. Alvarez was sent to Samarkand together with his confrere, Fr. Paolo Giacinti, in order to revive the pastoral activity of the local parish, without a priest for a long time. "In this city, during the nineties, lived a large number of Catholics. On the basis of the parish archives, we found traces of meetings and retreats in which more than a hundred people participated. The economic crisis of recent years has led many of them to return to their countries of origin, especially Poland, Germany, Ukraine. To this, we must add the fact that, for about three years, the community did not have a parish priest, but was assisted, as much as possible, by priests from other cities who came here during the weekend. Without a fixed point of reference, the faithful have dispersed a bit. Now we are two and we will try to make our presence felt. From a pastoral point of view, there is a lot to do". (Source: [Fides, 3 March 2021](#))

External Links - Situation in brief

- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- Specific examples of positive developments: Fides, 3 March 2021 - http://www.fides.org/en/news/69701-ASIA_UZBEKISTAN_Testimony_of_the_new_parish_priest_in_Samarkand_Let_God_s_beauty_shine_through_the_joy_of_fraternity

WWL 2022: Keys to understanding / Uzbekistan

Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International country report	AI 2021	https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/uzbekistan/	8 July 2021
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16218112	8 July 2021
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2020	BTI 2020	https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard-UZB.html	8 July 2021
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uzbekistan/	8 July 2021
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2020	EIU 2020	https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf	8 July 2021
FFP's Fragile States Index 2021	FSI 2021	https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/	8 July 2021
Freedom House's 2021 Democracy index	Freedom House/Democracy 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/country/uzbekistan/nations-transit/2021	8 July 2021
Freedom House's 2021 Global Freedom index	Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/country/uzbekistan/freedom-world/2021	8 July 2021
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2020 report	Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020	https://freedomhouse.org/country/uzbekistan/freedom-net/2020	8 July 2021
Garda World country report	Garda World	https://www.garda.com/crisis24/country-reports/uzbekistan	8 July 2021
Human Rights Watch World Report 2021	HRW 2021	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/uzbekistan	8 July 2021
Internet World Stats 2021	IWS 2021	https://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm#uz	8 July 2021
RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index	World Press Freedom 2020	https://rsf.org/en/uzbekistan	8 July 2021
Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index	CPI 2020	https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/uzbekistan	8 July 2021
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators	HDI	http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UZB	8 July 2021
US State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom country reports	IRFR 2020	https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/uzbekistan/	8 July 2021
USCIRF 2021 country reports	USCIRF 2021	https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/Uzbekistan%20Chapter%20AR2021.pdf	8 July 2021
World Bank country report	World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uzbekistan	8 July 2021

Recent history

On 20 June 1990, Uzbekistan declared its state sovereignty and on 31 August 1991 its independence. 1 September was proclaimed National Independence Day. Presidential elections were held for the first time in Uzbekistan on 29 December 1991 and Islam Karimov was elected as the first president of Uzbekistan. He stayed in power until his death on 2 September 2016. Under Karimov religious freedom was increasingly restricted.

In the presidential elections on 4 December 2016, Uzbekistan's interim president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, became the second president of Uzbekistan. While the new government opened up towards its neighbors and Russia, the restrictions on religious freedom hardly changed.

Uzbekistan had been designated as a Country of Particular Concern by the US Secretary of State from 2006-2017 and was moved in November 2018 to the Special Watch List category after the Secretary determined that the government had made substantial progress in improving respect for religious freedom. That progress was achieved is only partially true. Officially registered churches like the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the registered Bap-

tists have indeed noted slight improvements. But for other Christians, especially for Christians with a Muslim background, the situation has not changed significantly and Christians have continued to be targets for raids, arrests and oppression.

Since President Mirziyoyev became president in December 2016, Uzbekistan's foreign policy has changed in many respects. It contacted [China](#) in 2019 for economic cooperation (Jamestown Foundation, 4 September 2019). On 6 March 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan approved the decision to apply for observer status with the [Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union](#) (EEU) (Jamestown Foundation, 23 March 2020). The move brought to a close months of speculation about whether Tashkent would end the previous president's policy of eschewing all Moscow-led integration processes.

Political and legal landscape

Uzbekistan has a constitution and parliament, but in fact all power lies in the hands of the president. All opposition movements and independent media are essentially banned.

In the decades of President Karimov's leadership (1991-2016), Uzbekistan withdrew from a number of regional bodies, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Economic Cooperation Organization. Uzbekistan was wary of too much influence from Russia, but the developments in Ukraine since 2014 have made the regime realize that it cannot act as independently as it would like to. Russia wrote off a large amount of Uzbekistan's debt in December 2014, but such actions are, of course, always tied to Russian expectations.

Parliamentary elections were held on [22 December 2019](#) under the slogan "New Uzbekistan, New Elections" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty - RFE/RL - 23 December 2019). The Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (LDPU) emerged as winner but observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) noted "serious irregularities" amid changes allowing "greater tolerance of independent voices". The elections were the first since Shavkat Mirziyoyev was elected president in December 2016.

After the death of Islam Karimov and the end of his nearly three decades of authoritarian leadership, President Mirziyoyev announced reforms. According to BTI 2020, from January 2017 to January 2019, a large number of laws and presidential decrees were adopted, which could create a breakthrough in domestic and foreign policy. One of the main strategic documents that sheds light on the government's future direction is the "[Action strategy](#) on five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017 to 2021", which was adopted in February 2017 (Tashkent Times, 8 February 2017). It prioritizes the following five areas:

- 1) Improving the system of state and public construction;
- 2) Ensuring the rule of law and further reforms of the legal system;
- 3) Economic development and liberalization;
- 4) Social development; ensuring security, interethnic cohesion and religious tolerance;
- 5) Implementing a balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy.

President Mirziyoyev's unprecedented reforms have created a new political, social and economic climate both in the country and in the region.

The [1992 Constitution](#) provides for freedom of religion or belief and separation of government and religion. A religious freedom "roadmap" approved by parliament in 2018 to implement all 12 of the recommendations of UN Special Rapporteur on Religion or Belief Ahmed Shaheed, simplified rules for registering religious organizations and their reporting requirements, but the underlying law on religion continued to make it difficult for religious groups to register.

According to a press release from [USCIRF on 16 July 2021](#) ("USCIRF Concerned by New Uzbekistan Religion Law"):

- "We are concerned that the newly signed legislation retains Uzbekistan's most severe limitations on freedom of religion or belief from previous laws, including restrictions on education, literature, and sharing of religious beliefs', said USCIRF Chair Nadine Maenza. 'USCIRF urges the U.S. government to encourage Uzbekistan, as a participating state in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, to continue on its path of positive change and conform its Religion Law with international standards.'"

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2020):

- "Members of religious groups whose registration applications the government denied remained unable to practice their religious beliefs without risking criminal prosecution. According to religious freedom advocates and media, controversy over government policies on beards and the wearing of hijabs continued. In August, a court sentenced five men to up to 11.5 years in prison and three men to restricted movement after the group discussed their religious beliefs. The Ministry of Interior released a public statement saying minors could freely pray at mosques when accompanied by their parents, siblings, and other close relatives."

According to HRW 2021:

- There were many issues which saw little or no improvement at all. "Thousands of people, mainly peaceful religious believers, remain in prison on false charges. The National Security Service still holds strong powers to detain perceived critics, and there is no genuine political pluralism. During 2020, there were reports of torture and ill-treatment in prisons, most former prisoners were not rehabilitated, journalists and activists were persecuted, independent rights groups were denied registration, and forced labor was not eliminated."

On 6 July 2021, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed the new version of the law "On freedom of conscience and religious associations", which provides a simplified procedure for the registration and termination of their activities. The document was published in the Parliament Official Gazette and has already entered into force. (Source: [AsiaNews, 7 July 2021](#)) According to Forum 18, Uzbekistan's new Religion Law maintains almost all the restrictions on freedom of religion and belief in the current Religion Law. It continues to ban:

- i) all exercise of freedom of religion and belief without state permission;
- ii) teaching about religion without state permission;
- iii) sharing beliefs;

- iv) publishing, distributing or importing printed and electronic religious materials which have not undergone compulsory prior state censorship.

The continuing restrictions are in defiance of Uzbekistan's legally binding international human rights obligations. (Source: [Forum 18, 5 July 2021](#))

Additionally, there remain significant legal gaps that serve to disadvantage women and girls. In particular, marriage is a place where violent repression of women takes place, especially of female converts. Whilst rape is outlawed in the Criminal code (Art 118), there is no provision to protect victims from marital rape and until recently, there was no legislation addressing domestic violence. Representing a positive development, new legislation was introduced in 2019 [on gender equality](#) and [domestic violence](#) which resulted in hundreds of shelters being built. Critics note, however, that Uzbekistan's legal system continues to provide perpetrators impunity and that the legislation has not adequately been implemented ([Equality Now, 2020](#)). As observed by the [OECD \(2019\)](#), there remains a significant divergence between the law and customary practice, with women often disadvantaged in divorce, custody and inheritance proceedings. Child marriage also remains an ongoing practice, despite being illegal, with [7% of girls](#) marrying before the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides).

Military service is officially mandatory in Uzbekistan, but the army is of a sufficient size that not all young men need to be enlisted. Military service is understood to be less severe than in neighboring countries, although Christian men have faced hostile treatment and harassment within this context ([World Population Review, 2019](#)).

Religious landscape

Uzbekistan: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	347,000	1.0
Muslim	32,356,000	96.2
Hindu	810	0.0
Buddhist	46,200	0.1
Ethno-religionist	62,700	0.2
Jewish	3,900	0.0
Bahai	920	0.0
Atheist	189,000	0.6
Agnostic	640,000	1.9
Other	1,640	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 April 2021)

Although Uzbekistan's main religion is Islam – predominantly Sunni - it would be wrong to call Uzbekistan a Muslim country. 70 years of atheism during the Soviet era have left a deep influence. The government (the heirs of the atheist Soviets) is staunchly secular and keeps Islam under tight control, with citizens following Islamic culture rather than adhering strictly to Islamic teachings.

People in Uzbekistan still revere their glorious Islamic past when the universities and madrassas of Samarkand and Bukhara were famous for their scientific research and attracted people from all over the world. Their three Muslim kingdoms (khanates) once controlled huge tracts of Central Asia (a much greater geographical area than the present Uzbekistan).

The 2.5% agnostic and atheist part of the population is the result of 70 years of atheist propaganda by the Soviet authorities.

Evangelistic activities by Protestant Christians in Uzbekistan are not appreciated and immediately draw the attention of the authorities. Muslims oppose such activities as well. Converts from Islam face opposition from their families, friends and communities. The pressure is highest in the region of Uzbekistan that is known for its most conservative Muslim population - the Fergana Valley.

The small Christian minority is weak due to much division and little cooperation between the various denominations. There are few exceptions to this and it plays into the hands of the government.

Economic landscape

According to the World Bank country report:

- **GDP (current US\$):** 50.39 billions (in 2019)
- **GDP growth (annual):** 5.4% - Uzbekistan's GDP growth has been declining since 2010

The Uzbek economy is characterized by high levels of unemployment, poverty and inflation. As it is impossible to provide jobs for all people within Uzbekistan itself, there is massive labor migration - around seven or eight million male Uzbek citizens are working abroad, mainly in Russia and Kazakhstan. The money they send home (some US \$ 5.67 billion per year) make up 16.3% of Uzbekistan's annual income. Migrant workers are vulnerable but there are also positive effects, since Uzbeks working abroad are much more open to outreach by Christians.

The Uzbek economy is dependent on the growth of cotton. Everything is sacrificed to increase the yield of this crop. Teachers, students, civil servants, schoolchildren, prisoners and many others are forced to help bring in the harvest each year. The use of pesticides is enormous and has affected public health negatively. Water is being drained from the two major rivers (Amy Darya and Syr Darya) to irrigate the cotton fields in such quantities that there are regular water shortages which has led to a constant sinking of Aral Sea water levels.

Uzbekistan holds a strategic position in the East-West connection between China and the West. A new version of the Silk Road is under construction, which is being pushed by both China and Turkey. This means that there are huge construction activities in progress building highways for trucks and tracks for trains.

The 2020 COVID-19 crisis had a huge impact on the Uzbek economy. Many migrant workers abroad lost their jobs. More than a [thousand](#) Uzbeks were stranded in Kazakhstan's southern region of Turkistan because they were unable to travel back home due to travel restrictions (RFE/RL, 3 July 2020).

Christians in Uzbekistan suffer from the same economic problems as the rest of the population, for instance: High unemployment and poverty. Women are on balance more economically vulnerable in Uzbekistan due to lower education and employment rates; according to [Trading Economics](#) (accessed 8 July 2021) 40.78% of the total labor force is female. Making it additionally challenging for women and girls to be economically dependent, patrilineal inheritance practices continue ([OECD, 2019](#)) despite the right to equal inheritance being guaranteed in law ([Article 36 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan](#)).

Social and cultural landscape

According to the [UNDP's full 2020 report](#) (page 343) and the CIA Factbook:

- **Main ethnic groups:** Uzbek 83.8%, Tajik 4.8%, Kazakh 2.5%, Russian 2.3%, Karakalpak 2.2%, Tatar 1.5%, other 4.4% (2017 est.).
- **Main languages:** Uzbek (official) 74.3%, Russian 14.2%, Tajik 4.4%, other 7.1%.
- **Urban population:** 50.4 % of total population (2019 est.)
- **Literacy rate:** 100% (2016 est.)

According to UN Global Human Development Indicators (HDI 2021):

- **HDI score and ranking:** 0.720, ranking 106.
- **Total population:** 37.4 million
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 71.7 years
- **Expected years of schooling:** 12.1 (The gender gap in relation to school enrolment rates has closed over the past decade, although girls remain less likely to attend secondary school or tertiary education due to socio-cultural and socio-economic barriers ([The Borgen Project, 2019](#)).
- **Employment to population ratio (% ages 15 years and older):** 62.1
- **Population in multidimensional poverty, headcount (thousands – for the year of the survey):** data not available
- **Gender inequality index:** 0.288.

Corruption is endemic at all levels of administration and government. The power groups within the regime have no interest in losing the opportunity of making money. The changes in government since December 2016 do not seem to have brought any action against this.

Another social phenomenon is that more than one quarter of the Uzbek population is younger than fourteen. This so-called youth-bulge puts massive pressure on the government to create

new job opportunities every year. It also means that Uzbekistan will be facing significant changes in the not too distant future as the majority of the population will no longer have any affinities with the Soviet past.

Thanks to the former Soviet educational system, practically every citizen in Uzbekistan is literate. This means that people who are interested in the Christian message can read materials in their own language. The restrictions imposed by the government (all materials must be approved and only registered groups may be active) mean that most distribution must be done unofficially.

Uzbekistan operates according to Islamic and patriarchal norms, whereby men and women are expected to assume traditional gender roles; men are expected to assume the role of decision makers and financial providers, whilst women are expected to prioritize household duties. Despite gender equality being enshrined in [Articles 18 and 46](#) in the Constitution of Uzbekistan, discriminatory household practices and socio-cultural barriers prevent women from realizing these rights ([OECD, 2019](#)). Domestic violence victims – primarily women – are viewed negatively if they choose to leave the marriage, and spaces in women’s shelters fall significantly short of the need ([Reuters, 27 November 2020](#)). Many victims choose not to leave their abusive partner, as they fear bringing shame upon their family or being vilified.

Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2021):

- **Internet usage:** 52.3% penetration - survey date: December 2020
- **Facebook usage:** 13.0% penetration - survey date: December 2020
According to [NapoleonCat \(2019\)](#), there are significantly more male than female users of Facebook (69.8%).

According to World Bank:

- **Mobile phone subscriptions:** 71.5 per 100 people (2018)

Key technological developments according to [BuddeComm Research](#) (updated 2 February 2021):

- For many years Uzbekistan has been struggling to bring its telecommunications system up to the standard found in developed countries. Over the last decade the situation has been improving gradually, and as a consequence there has been a positive trend in the country’s telecom market, with increased investment in infrastructure, expanding subscriber bases and rising revenue. The support of the government, which has formulated a telecom sector policy through to 2030, will be key in the development of the country’s needed infrastructure.
- The fixed line market in Uzbekistan remains underdeveloped. A major reason for this is the dominance of the mobile segment, which has stymied fixed-line investment. The market is predicted to grow only moderately over the next five years.
- Uzbekistan’s mobile market is relatively underdeveloped by international standards, with only slow growth recorded over the last five years. During the next few years the market will be constrained from higher growth due to the cost of mobile services relative to the low income of most of the population.

According to Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020:

- "Uzbekistan registered another incremental increase in internet freedom, its fourth consecutive improvement in its Freedom on the Net score. Access rates in the country continued to grow, although authorities have not loosened their grip over the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, despite pledging to do so. In a welcome move, the government unblocked another tranche of websites in December 2019, although it also moved to impose new restrictions on bloggers, perhaps out of recognition that an ever-increasing number of citizens consume news from independent Telegram channels and other social media platforms. Citizens continued to face legal and extrajudicial consequences for their online activities, as evinced by March 2020 revelations that journalists and human rights defenders had been the targets of a sophisticated phishing campaign."

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2020):

- Ongoing reforms under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev have led to improvements on some issues. However, "media reported the government continued to block access to some websites containing religious content, including a Jehovah's Witnesses site and the site of the international religious freedom organization Forum 18. The government maintained a list of illegal websites it stated were linked to Islamic extremist activity."

All media, including the Internet, are under strict state control and are censored. As a result, Christians in Uzbekistan do not have their own media platform, and have difficulty in accessing foreign Christian media. As all digital communication is monitored, Christians have to be careful how they use social media and email.

Georgetown's [Women, Peace and Security index](#) highlights a gender gap in regards to technology, noting that Uzbekistan performs worst in the Central Asian region (Georgetown, 2019/20, p.36). It is therefore harder for women to access digital Christian resources or online Christian communities.

Security situation

Since independence from the Soviet Union, the relationship with neighboring republics Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has at times been tense and there have been ethnic clashes between Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kyrgyz in the past few years. The main reason for political tension is the water supply. Uzbekistan depends greatly on water from the Syr-Darya and Amu-Darya rivers for its cotton harvest. These rivers enter Uzbekistan via Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and both countries are considering making use of the rivers for energy by constructing dams. Uzbekistan fears this will severely damage its main crop and has threatened with war should water be diverted away from Uzbekistan. However, since Mirziyoyev took over as president, relations with neighboring states have improved. Nevertheless, in May-June 2020, there were several [border incidents](#) between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, 16 July 2020). These incidents - none of which have escalated into wider conflicts - reveal once again the transboundary lifestyle of Central Asian people and the artificial character of the borders that separate independent states from each other.

Although Islam in Uzbekistan is generally of a traditional and moderate character, the country has experienced attacks in the past from radical Islamic groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic Jihad Union, both connected with the al-Qaeda network. So far, the government has been able to expel them from the country. The Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan's south-east is known for the presence of other radical Islamic groups.

Many young Uzbeks are inspired by the activities of radical Islamic groups like the Islamic State group (IS). It is estimated that hundreds of Uzbeks were fighting with the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq. In September 2014 an IS flag was displayed from a bridge in Tashkent. According to a warning by the [UK Government travel advice](#) (accessed on 9 June 2021), on 6 November 2019, 17 people were killed in an armed attack on a Tajik security check-point on the Uzbek/Tajik border, with IS claiming responsibility. Thousands of suspected members of Islamist groups have been imprisoned and the Uzbek government has sought Russian assistance to combat the threat of any increasing militancy.

Over the past years Uzbekistan has dropped down the rankings of Georgetown's [Women, Peace and Security index](#), primarily reflecting a worsening security situation and lack of community safety. The lack of official data makes it challenging to identify the scale of violence against women, but it is understood to be [significant](#) (RFE/RL, 7 March 2021). Media reports highlighted a rise in domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (HRW 2021). Bride kidnapping, despite being illegal, is also reportedly an ongoing issue in Uzbekistan ([OECD, 2019](#)).

Trends analysis

1) Uzbekistan remains an authoritarian regime but there are improvements

Despite the change in leadership since the death of President Islam Karimov on 2 September 2016, very little has changed for Christians in Uzbekistan. It is still difficult to obtain official registration and those churches that are without registration remained unable to practice their religious beliefs without risking criminal prosecution. On the other hand, since 2018, there have been considerably fewer raids on churches.

2) Uzbekistan's foreign policy is changing

After the death of President Karimov, Uzbekistan has done its best to improve its relationship with its neighbors and President Mirziyoyev has paid visits to practically all other Central Asian countries and Russia. However, the results of this were limited as border conflicts with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have continued to erupt from time to time. Uzbekistan has also done its best to improve relationships with Western countries such as the USA. To achieve better relations, the pressure on registered churches was reduced, which in turn led to positive reactions from both the US State Department and USCIRF (see above: *Political and legal landscape*).

External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: China - <https://jamestown.org/program/uzbekistan-increasingly-turns-to-china-for-development-loans/>
- Recent history: Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union - <https://jamestown.org/program/uzbekistan-temporarily-chooses-observer-status-instead-of-full-membership-in-eurasian-union/>

- Political and legal landscape: 22 December 2019 - <https://www.rferl.org/a/osce-serious-irregularities-in-uzbek-vote-but-greater-tolerance-of-independent-voices-/30340210.html>
- Political and legal landscape: Action strategy - <http://tashkenttimes.uz/national/541-uzbekistan-s-development-strategy-for-2017-2021-has-been-adopted-following->
- Political and legal landscape: 1992 Constitution - <http://constitution.uz/en>
- Political and legal landscape: USCIRF on 16 July 2021 - <https://www.uscirf.gov/countries/uzbekistan/uscirf-concerned-new-uzbekistan-religion-law>
- Political and legal landscape: AsiaNews, 7 July 2021 - <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tashkent-approves-new-law-on-religious-freedom--53595.html>
- Political and legal landscape: Forum 18, 5 July 2021 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2670
- Political and legal landscape: on gender equality - <https://lex.uz/docs/4494712>
- Political and legal landscape: domestic violence - <https://lex.uz/docs/4494873>
- Political and legal landscape: Equality Now, 2020 - https://www.equalitynow.org/uzbekistan_human_rights
- Political and legal landscape: OECD (2019) - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/UZ.pdf>
- Political and legal landscape: 7% of girls - <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/uzbekistan/>
- Political and legal landscape: World Population Review, 2019 - <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/countries-with-mandatory-military-service/>
- Economic landscape: thousand - <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbek-tajik-migrant-workers-stranded-in-kazakhstan/30704986.html>
- Economic landscape: Trading Economics - <https://tradingeconomics.com/uzbekistan/labor-force-female-percent-of-total-labor-force-wb-data.html>
- Economic landscape: OECD, 2019 - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/UZ.pdf>
- Economic landscape: Article 36 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan - <https://www.un.int/uzbekistan/uzbekistan/constitution-republic-uzbekistan>
- Social and cultural landscape: UNDP's full 2020 report - <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2020.pdf>
- Social and cultural landscape: The Borgen Project, 2019 - <https://borgenproject.org/tag/girls-education-in-uzbekistan/>
- Social and cultural landscape: Articles 18 and 46 - <https://www.un.int/uzbekistan/uzbekistan/constitution-republic-uzbekistan>
- Social and cultural landscape: OECD, 2019 - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/UZ.pdf>
- Social and cultural landscape: Reuters, 27 November 2020 - <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uzbekistan-women-crime-feature-idUSKBN28707L>
- Technological landscape: NapoleonCat (2019) - <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-uzbekistan/2021/01>
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Uzbekistan-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses>
- Technological landscape: Women, Peace and Security index - <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WPS-Index-2019-20-Report.pdf>
- Security situation: border incidents - <https://cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13632-border-problems-in-central-asia-dividing-incidents-uniting-solution.html>
- Security situation: UK Government travel advice - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/uzbekistan>
- Security situation: Women, Peace and Security index - <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WPS-Index-2019-20-Report.pdf>
- Security situation: significant - <https://www.rferl.org/a/majlis-podcast-gender-bias-kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan/31138226.html>
- Security situation: OECD, 2019 - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/UZ.pdf>

WWL 2022: Church information / Uzbekistan

Christian origins

The first Christians to enter Central Asia (including Uzbekistan) were Nestorian missionaries in the 4th century. The Nestorian church experienced a period of decline starting in the 14th century, when the Mongol rulers of the region finally decided to convert to Islam. Thereafter, [Nestorian Christianity](#) was largely confined to Upper Mesopotamia and the Malabar Coast of India (Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed 25 June 2020).

The current presence of Christians in Uzbekistan dates from the 19th century. In 1867 the Russian Empire expanded its territory into Central Asia through a number of military campaigns, bringing in ethnic Russians who mostly belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church. During the Second World War, Joseph Stalin ordered the deportation of large numbers of ethnic Germans, Ukrainians, Poles and Koreans from Russia to Central Asia, fearing they would otherwise present a security risk. With them, other Christian denominations found their way into Uzbekistan. After Uzbekistan became an independent country in 1991, non-traditional Christian communities became active among the Uzbek population.

Church spectrum today

Uzbekistan: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	198,000	57.1
Catholic	3,500	1.0
Protestant	41,900	12.1
Independent	90,300	26.0
Unaffiliated	13,100	3.8
Doubly-affiliated Christians	0	0.0
Total	346,800	99.9
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	14,400	4.1
Renewalist movement	86,100	24.8

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

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 World Christian Database (accessed April 2021) the largest denominations in Uzbekistan are:

- Russian Orthodox Church
- Independents
- Armenian Apostolic Church
- Ukrainian Orthodox Church

External Links - Church information

- Christian origins: Nestorian Christianity - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nestorianism>

WWL 2022: Persecution Dynamics / Uzbekistan

Reporting period

01 October 2020 - 30 September 2021

Position on the World Watch List

Uzbekistan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	71	21
WWL 2021	71	21
WWL 2020	73	18
WWL 2019	74	17
WWL 2018	73	16

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2018-2022 reporting periods

The score of 71 points is the same as in WWL 2021. The score for pressure in all spheres of life went down except in the *Community sphere of life*. The increase in the level of violence compensated for that. The two main Persecution engines in Uzbekistan (Dictatorial paranoia and Islamic oppression (blended with Clan oppression)) are active in all spheres of life, but Islamic oppression (blended with Clan oppression) dominates in the *Private* and *Family spheres of life*, while Dictatorial paranoia dominates in the *National* and *Church spheres of life*. Both engines 'meet' each other in the *Community sphere of life*. Muslim families, friends and villagers exert pressure on converts in particular, while the government imposes many restrictions on church activities. The situation for Christians in Uzbekistan remains serious. Improvement was expected when President Mirziyoyev came to power, but this has not materialized.

Persecution engines

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

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

Dictatorial paranoia (Strong)

No religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. Protestants are frequently branded as "extremists" for their practice of religion outside state-sanctioned structures. It is very common that members of Protestant churches are regarded as followers of an alien sect that has only one goal, namely to spy on and destroy the current political system. From this perspective they need to be not only controlled, but if necessary, even eradicated. Security forces have stepped up monitoring measures in order to find "extremists". This has also affected Christians and churches.

Islamic oppression (blended with Clan oppression) (Strong)

If indigenous citizens (who are Muslim) convert to Christianity, they are likely to experience pressure and occasionally physical violence from their families, friends and local community to force them to return to their former faith. Some converts are locked up by their families for long periods, beaten and may eventually be expelled from their communities. Local imams preach against them, so adding pressure. As a result, most converts will do their best to hide their faith – they become so-called secret believers.

Drivers of persecution

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

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 Dictatorial paranoia

- Government officials (Strong):** The law prohibits all unregistered religious activity and religious propagation in any form. Religious literature can only be used by registered religious associations within its registration area. Protestant groups are regarded as suspect and are forbidden from distributing Christian material. Many Christians have been arrested for trying to convert local Muslims. Non-Orthodox Christians are known to be detained, fined and beaten for simply possessing Christian materials or simply participating in illegal religious groups (which most non-Orthodox groups are deemed). The authorities frequently confiscate (or steal) Christian property and possessions. A clever way of prohibiting proselytization is that it is illegal to preach in the Uzbek language; one can only do it in Russian. However, Russian is only spoken by the older generation, making church growth more difficult.

- **Political parties (Strong):** Few parties are allowed in Uzbekistan but the ruling party which controls the government of President Mirziyoyev participates in persecution insofar as much of the pressure and violence targeting Christians is government-sanctioned.
- **Normal citizens (Medium):** Especially at the local level, mobs with support from the government have been known to interrupt Christian religious festivals and celebrations.

Drivers of Islamic oppression (blended with Clan oppression)

- **Extended family (Very strong):** Pressure from family, friends and community are extremely high on converts, especially in rural areas. This can lead to threats, beatings, house arrest or ostracism.
- **Ethnic or Clan group leaders (Strong):** With the support of the authorities, leaders of [Mahalla community groups](#) have been given government authorization to prohibit Christian missionary activity (Global Informality Project, updated 17 May 2019).
- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** Most Muslim clerics are open in their hostility towards non-Orthodox Christians - particularly towards converts from Islam.
- **Normal citizens (Strong):** Converts to Christianity are treated severely by the local community.
- **Government officials (Medium):** At the community level there is a link between local officials and Muslim pressure. Often, active Muslims and local officials know each other. Therefore, the pressure on converts is stronger at the community level than at the state level (where officials claim to be secular).

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The level of persecution by government officials in Uzbekistan is the same all over the country. Pressure from family, friends and community on converts is stronger outside the urban areas, especially in the Fergana Valley in the east.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians in Uzbekistan are not forced into isolation. This category is therefore not included for scoring in the WWL analysis.

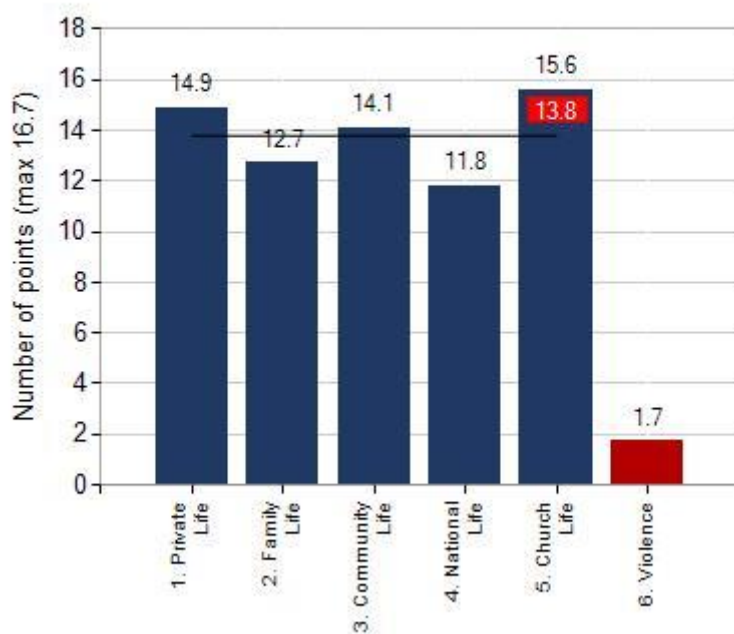
Historical Christian communities: The Russian Orthodox Church has accustomed itself to the limitations provided by the government and is therefore left more or less undisturbed. Church services may be monitored, but they are conducted unhindered and members can meet without fear of arrest. However, the printing or importing of Christian materials is restricted.

Converts to Christianity: Christian converts from a Muslim background bear the brunt of persecution in Uzbekistan. Apart from suffering at the hands of the state, they are also under strong pressure from family, friends and community. For them, hostility from the latter is by far the most serious challenge.

Non-traditional Christian communities: After converts, this category of Christians is the second most persecuted group - and especially when the churches have not been registered. Baptist, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups suffer from raids, threats, arrests and fines.

The Persecution pattern

WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern for Uzbekistan



The WWL 2022 Persecution pattern for Uzbekistan shows:

- The average pressure on Christians is at an extremely high level (13.8 points), just slightly lower than the 14.0 score in WWL 2021. Very little has changed in Uzbekistan over the last year.
- The following spheres of life have extremely high values: the *Private* and *Church spheres of life*; the scores for the *Family*, *Community* and *National spheres of life* are classified as very high. The fact that the highest score is still in the *Church sphere* reflects the extreme pressure the state is continuing to impose through many restrictions.
- The low score for violence increased from 1.3 in WWL 2021 to 1.7 in WWL 2022.

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: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (3.75 points)

In the case of converts, persecution comes most of all from their family or community if they find Christian materials. Christian materials are considered as hard evidence for conversion. Discovery can lead to fierce reactions. Pressure from the government is also high since it is illegal

to possess religious materials. Even a Bible must bear a stamp indicating that it was published in Uzbekistan. It is illegal to have more than one Bible per person. It is illegal to carry a Bible outside your home. It is illegal to read the Bible or any religious literature in public. A family was once fined for a Christian poem found on a piece of paper in the bed of a boy who was memorizing it for Sunday school.

Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (3.75 points)

From the Muslim perspective, this has two sides to it: First, converts who reveal their new faith will instantly draw the ire of their family, friends and community; and secondly, other Christians will immediately be suspected of carrying out evangelism. As the state opposes evangelism, Christians must be very careful in this respect. Any Christian who reveals his/her faith publicly will immediately draw the attention of the state and its agents.

Block 1.8: It has been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those other than immediate family (extended family, others). (3.75 points)

It is already very risky for a convert to talk about his new faith with members of the family and the latter will make it virtually impossible for the convert to do this with non-family members. The shame and honor culture will make sure that the family will try to prevent this at all costs. Also, the state views such behavior as an attempt at evangelism and will oppose it by arresting these Christians.

Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (3.75 points)

Converts run the risk of drawing unwanted attention from their social environment when they meet with other Christians. Many Uzbek Christians only meet one to one as it is less dangerous and often change places where they meet. Worship must be silent or very quiet. Due to the very high level of surveillance in Uzbekistan, all non-Orthodox Christians are very careful in this respect. Religious activities can officially only take place in buildings of registered churches. No such activities are allowed in house churches, for instance.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (3.75 points)

The pressure on converts not to go through with baptism is immense, as it is often regarded as the ultimate sign that one has left Islam. The Muslim environment will go to extremes to prevent baptisms of converts. The state will oppose baptisms of converts as they fear this could lead to tensions and problems in the community. Also, the state will oppose unregistered groups in all their activities, including baptisms. Baptisms are not, however, legally forbidden.

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

Muslim families and communities will block the adoption of an ethnic Central Asian child if it is known that the adopting person is a convert or other Christian. The government imposes no re-

strictions regarding adoption. However, a case was recorded of a boy being taken back to the orphanage after reporting to a social worker that his adopted parents had been teaching him about the Christian faith.

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (3.75 points)

The extended family of converts will try to bring the children of converts back to Islam and raise them accordingly. The school system also contributes to this since - as Uzbekistan is officially a secular state - no religious teaching is provided in schools. The only place for parents to provide Christian teaching is at home, since all church youthwork has been made illegal. Parents must be careful that they do not draw too much attention from both family and the local authorities by doing this.

Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (3.50 points)

The Muslim environment (family, friends, community) will pressurize children of converts in particular to receive Islamic teaching - sometimes even against the wishes of their parents. Anti-religious propaganda at schools and universities happens on a regular basis, for instance in the form of lectures. Attendance at such lectures is compulsory.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

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.). (3.75 points)

Converts are threatened by family, friends and community (including the local imam). Local Muslim communities will also harass Protestants who they accuse of evangelism. Evangelicals also face harassment, threats, discrimination etc. from the authorities.

Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.75 points)

Converts are constantly monitored by family and the surrounding community. At the community level, Muslims also monitor the activities of Protestant groups closely and report on their activities to the local police. Government agents at all levels are constantly monitoring Christian activities - all but the Russian Orthodox Church are on their radar.

Block 3.12: Christians have been fined for faith-related reasons (e.g. jizya tax, community tax, protection money). (3.75 points)

Fines are issued by state agents for a long list of possible offences, e.g. for meeting illegally, for the possession of religious literature, for having Christian songs on their smartphones, etc. Even technically legal groups (such as Baptists) face this kind of persecution.

Block 3.13: Christians have been interrogated or compelled to report to the local vigilante/police for faith-related reasons. (3.75 points)

Known converts will be harassed and interrogated (sometimes harshly) by their family and community. When meetings or houses are raided (which is a common thing), all those present face interrogation. Known converts will be required to go to the local police station from time to time, to keep them intimidated. They can also be stopped in the street, searched and interrogated.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

Block 4.1: The Constitution (or comparable national or state law) limits freedom of religion as formulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (4.00 points)

The law requires religious groups to register with the government and declares religious activities of unregistered groups to be illegal. The law restricts public speech and proselytism, censors religious literature and limits the possession of religious materials of all types and formats in private homes. Raids on Christians' homes have resulted in a combination of fines, corrective labor and prison sentences.

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

There are no Christian political parties or Christian civil society organizations in Uzbekistan. The fact of applying for registration could be sufficient to be arrested by the police on the grounds of trying to establish an extremist organization. Any Christian organization will be regarded as an attempt to convert people to Christianity and will be blocked.

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

This is very dangerous for non-Orthodox Christians and will cause threats of reprisals from both the government and the local Uzbek community. The level of persecution is so intense that converts and non-Orthodox Christians must keep their religion effectively secret. Any public expression of their faith is likely to be perceived by the government as proselytization. Russian Orthodox Christians normally do not speak about their religious beliefs in public. Muslims consider Christian preaching and evangelism undesirable and will obstruct this with all means available.

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

When the authorities act against Christians, they do so with the backing of the law and generally interpret their enforcement of the law as they deem acceptable. The authorities can generally expect to act with utter impunity. Harm caused to converts and Christians accused of evangelism by the Muslim community (mostly at the local and provincial level) will almost certainly happen with impunity.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

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

Any Christian activities outside the buildings of registered churches are prohibited. The Muslim community would anyway immediately oppose any such action and report it to the authorities.

Block 5.6: Work among youth in particular has been restricted. (4.00 points)

Religious work among youth and minors - including Sunday schools and youth summer camps - are prohibited. The Muslim community will report any sign of youth events and summer camps taking place to the authorities.

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

The criminal code punishes proselytism - the attempt to convert persons belonging to a certain religion to another religion - with up to three years in prison (Source: US State Department IRFR 2017 Uzbekistan). It is therefore dangerous for churches to openly accept converts. Conversion is vehemently opposed, especially by Muslims in rural areas.

Block 5.13: Churches have been hindered in importing Christian materials from abroad. (4.00 points)

All religious materials must be approved by the government. Very few items are able to pass this hurdle. Even the Bible Society is having problems doing this. Muslims will report to the authorities if they discover Christians are importing religious materials illegally.

Violence

Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following 5 points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:

1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced. Possible reasons for this may be:

- *Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.*
- *In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.*
- *If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.*
- *In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.*

2. Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:

- *Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage*

is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).

- *In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.*
- *Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately. Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other oppressive factors that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. These numbers could be immense.*

3. For further discussion (with a focus on the complexity of assessing the numbers of Christians killed for their faith) please see World Watch Monitor’s article dated 13 November 2013 available at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/number-of-christian-martyrs-continues-to-cause-debate/>.

4. The use of symbolic numbers: *In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10*, 100* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000*, 100,000* and 1,000,000*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.*

5. The symbol “x” in the table: *This denotes a known number which cannot be published due to security concerns.*

Uzbekistan: Violence Block question		WWL 2022	WWL 2021
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	0	0
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?	0	0
6.3	How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	5	6
6.4	How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	0	0
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	0	0
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	64	21

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?	2	0
6.10	How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.11	How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	8	4
6.12	How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

For the WWL 2022 reporting period, see above: *Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period.*

5 Year trends

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

5 Year trends: Average pressure

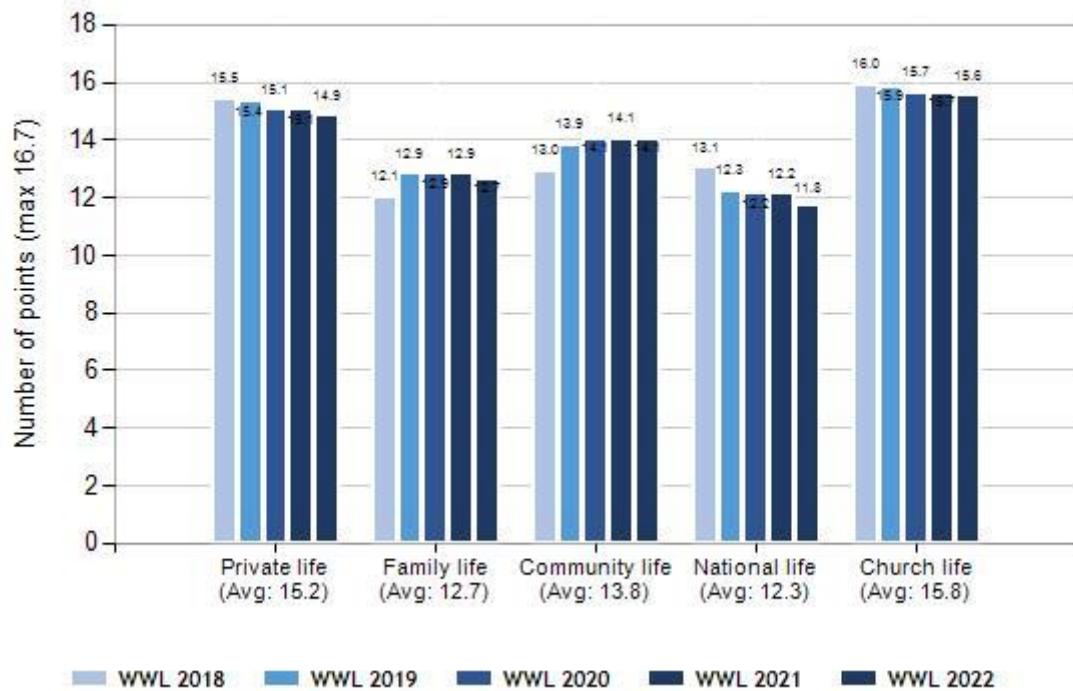
Uzbekistan: WWL 2018 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2022	13.8
2021	14.0
2020	14.0
2019	14.1
2018	13.9

As can be seen from the table above, the average pressure has remained extremely high and stable - within the range of 13.8 - 14.1 points - for the last five WWL reporting periods. This is a clear indication of how little the situation in the country has changed in recent years.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life

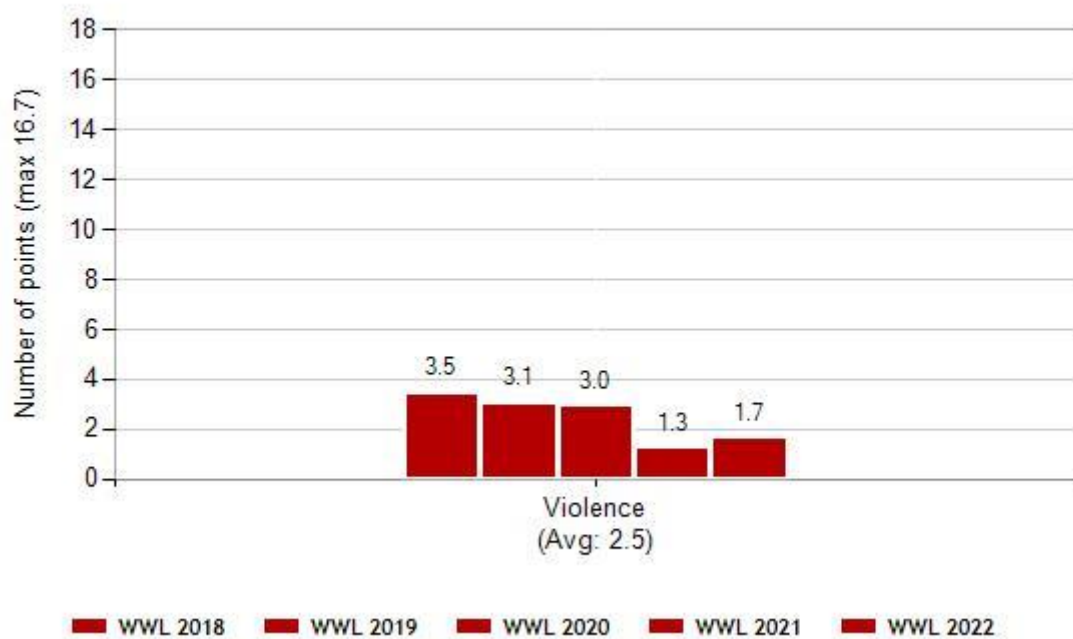
As can be seen in the chart below: Over the past five years the scores in the five *spheres of life* in Uzbekistan have not changed dramatically. This means that the situation for Christians in the country has been quite stable, with few changes occurring. The highest levels of pressure on Christians have continued to be recorded in *Private* and *Church life*, which reflect the operation of the two main Persecution engines in Uzbekistan: Dictatorial paranoia (in the *Church sphere of life*) and Islamic oppression, blended with Clan oppression (in the *Private sphere*).

WWL 2018 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern for Uzbekistan (Spheres of life)



5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

WWL 2018 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern for Uzbekistan (Violence)



As can be seen in the chart above: In the period WWL 2018 - WWL 2021, the score for violence targeting Christians had decreased steadily – indicating that the number of reported incidents had been falling each year. This decline came to a halt with WWL 2022, when more violent incidents were reported.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	Forced divorce; Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Incarceration by family (house arrest); Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Denied access to social community/networks; Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

While laws in Uzbekistan give equal rights to men and women, traditional Islamic culture places women lower than men and subservient to them within the family context. Total submission is expected from women to their parents, or if married, to their husbands. Perpetrators of violence against women commonly go unpunished, in part due to the lack of legislation addressing domestic violence (HRW 2021).

Within this patriarchal context, women are not free to choose their own religion and will face severe opposition upon conversion to Christianity. Persecutors target women both to inflict harm upon them, but also as an instrument to cause psychological harm on their husbands and wider family members. Incarceration by a convert's family (i.e. house arrest) remains a common and socially accepted form of putting female converts under pressure. Access to social networks, specifically Christian networks, is restricted in the hope that the convert will return to Islam.

Female converts, particularly those in conservative regions, run the risk of being kidnapped by their own communities and married off to a Muslim. While no cases have been reported in the WWL 2022 reporting period, this remains an ongoing risk. Families, too, arrange such marriages in the hope that the convert will return to Islam. Sexual violence within those marriages is an often unacknowledged component that becomes normalized under the legitimization that marriage gives. If already married at the point of conversion, Muslim husbands commonly divorce their wives and deny them their possessions. Pressure to divorce often comes from the wider family network. As a country expert explains, “the family most definitely would seek to remove their family member from the influence of a convert out of fear of evangelizing.”

Christian women and girls suffer from numerous daily pressures within the family unit, including verbal, physical, psychological and sexual violence. For women in rural settings, the lack of social

and municipal infrastructure renders them entirely reliant on their families. The violation of rights of women and girls also creates fear and anxiety within families and church communities.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	Discrimination/harassment via education; Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Political and Legal	Economic harassment via fines; Imprisonment by government
Security	Military/militia conscription/service against conscience; Violence – physical
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

Church leaders, most of whom are men, are common targets for violations of rights. Typically, they will be fined, detained, denied exit visas to leave the country, or put under house arrest. They can be fined for such offences as meeting illegally, possession of religious literature, or having Christian songs on their smartphones. The persecution of church leaders is a deliberate tactic, as targeting them causes a ripple effect, spreading fear and anxiety throughout their congregations. Pastors and lay leaders of unregistered churches in particular have been insulted, beaten and humiliated.

Christian men continue to face inequalities in every area of their lives. Some men will be denied promotion at work, while others may lose their job altogether unless they renounce their faith. Christian businessmen face constant state monitoring to see if they are involved in any illegal activities, as well as pressure from the local Muslim community who will often obstruct their business activities; this occurs mainly at the local level, rather than at the national level. As the man is normally the provider, this form of economic harassment has a crippling effect on the whole family, particularly following on from the negative impact of COVID-19 on Uzbekistan's economy. Family members feel fear, anger and anxiety. To avoid this, many Christian businessmen choose to keep their Christian faith secret.

Converts to Christianity also suffer from verbal, physical and psychological abuse, regularly being mocked in their places of work and study and coming under greater pressure from police officials. In addition, the obligation to fulfil military service also exposes Christian men to hostile situations and harassment.

Persecution of other religious minorities

As mentioned in *Political and legal landscape* above, a [USCIRF press release](#) from 16 July 2021 noted that "the newly signed legislation retains Uzbekistan's most severe limitations on freedom of religion or belief from previous laws, including restrictions on education, literature, and sharing of religious beliefs".

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2020):

- Members of religious groups whose registration applications the government denied remained unable to practice their religious beliefs without risking criminal prosecution. According to religious freedom advocates and media, controversy over government policies on beards and the wearing of hijabs continued. In August, a court sentenced five men to up to 11.5 years in prison and three men to restricted movement after the group discussed their religious beliefs. The Ministry of Interior released a public statement saying minors could freely pray at mosques when accompanied by their parents, siblings, and other close relatives. All religious groups, including Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews and Bahai all suffer under a very high level of state surveillance and oppression. The Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) is pivotal in this.

Examples of persecution of other religious groups:

- Shia Muslim, Jehovah's Witness, and Protestant religious communities have all had recent applications to exist refused. In many cases the excuse used has been refusals by local authorities to provide documents as part of the complex, time-consuming and expensive application process. In some cases registration applications have led to reprisals. (Source: [Forum 18, 15 December 2020](#))
- Members of religious communities and human rights defenders have criticized the draft new Criminal Code due to come into force on 1 January 2022. This would continue to punish those who exercise freedom of religion or belief without state permission. A "disguised old Criminal Code with no real changes", Protestants complain. Muslims describe it as "our government's old tricks". Solmaz Akhmedova of the Human Rights Alliance noted that "they just made some decorative changes, and used less religious terminology." (Source: [Forum 18, 12 March 2021](#))
- Officials have so far blocked Shia Muslims' attempts to reopen mosques in Bukhara with property excuses, and in Samarkand attempts have not been made as "they are afraid of the authorities". Officials have rejected other religious communities' recent applications to exist, or failed to respond. (Source: [Forum 18, 30 June 2021](#))

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Dictatorial paranoia

The current government exerts a very high level of control over the country. Little has changed since President Mirziyoyev succeeded his predecessor Karimov, despite the claims of both the US State Department and USCIRF. Government officials at all levels are the strongest drivers of pressure and violence targeting Christians in Uzbekistan. They have imposed all kinds of legal restrictions, monitor all religious activities, raid meetings and block the availability of religious materials. A special committee has been established to control the restrictions on religion - the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA). The chances that this situation will change in the near future are slim.

Islamic oppression/Clan oppression (blended)

Islam is not the state religion. It is the traditional religion of most of the population. Muslim pressure on Christians in Uzbekistan does not come from radical Islamic movements but from the far-reaching influence of family, friends and community on converts and on those Christians active in evangelistic activities. The chances that this will ever change are as good as non-existent.

Due to the stability of these two main Persecution engines, Christians in Uzbekistan will continue to face considerable levels of surveillance and pressure.

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Drivers of persecution description: Mahalla community groups - [https://informality.com/wiki/index.php?title=Mahallah_\(Uzbekistan\)](https://informality.com/wiki/index.php?title=Mahallah_(Uzbekistan))
- Persecution of other religious minorities: USCIRF press release - <https://www.uscirf.gov/countries/uzbekistan/uscirf-concerned-new-uzbekistan-religion-law>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 15 December 2020 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2622
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 12 March 2021 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2644
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 30 June 2021 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2669

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:

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Uzbekistan>
- <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/Uzbekistan>