

FINAL WWL 2019 COUNTRY DOSSIER

COLOMBIA

LEVEL 3/EMBARGO

(Reporting period: 1 November 2017 – 31 October 2018)

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Access to Country Dossiers with track changes	3
Copyright Notice	3
Introduction.....	3
WWL 2019: Keys to understanding Colombia	4
Link for general background information	4
Recent country history	4
The religious landscape	4
The political landscape	5
The socio-economic landscape	6
Concluding remarks.....	7
External Links - WWL 2019: Keys to understanding Colombia	7
WWL 2019: Church History and Facts.....	11
How many Christians?.....	11
How did Christians get there?.....	11
What church networks exist today?	11
Religious context	12
Notes on the current situation.....	12
External Links - WWL 2019: Church History and Facts	13
WWL 2019: Short & Simple Persecution Profile	14
Introduction.....	14
What type of persecution dominates?	14
Who is driving persecution?.....	14
What it results in	14
Violence	15
Examples of specific persecution in the reporting period	15
External Links - WWL 2019: Short & Simple Persecution Profile.....	15

WWL 2019: Persecution Dynamics 17

- Introduction..... 17
- Position on World Watch List (WWL)..... 17
- Persecution engines 17
- Drivers of persecution 19
- Context 20
- Christian communities and how they are affected 20
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence 21
- 5 Year trends 24
- Gender specific persecution..... 26
- Persecution of other religious minorities 26
- Future outlook..... 27
- External Links - WWL 2019: Persecution Dynamics 27

Additional Reports and Articles 30

- WWR in-depth reports 30
- Open Doors article(s) from the region 30
- World Watch Monitor news articles 30
- Recent country developments 30

Introduction

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Introduction

World Watch List Colombia	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2019	58	47
WWL 2018	56	49
WWL 2017	53	50
WWL 2016	55	46
WWL 2015	55	35

Scores and ranks are shown above whenever the country was among the fifty highest scoring countries (Top 50) in the WWL 2015-2019 reporting periods.

Please note: 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”.

WWL 2019: Keys to understanding Colombia

Link for general background information

BBC country profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-19390026>

Recent country history

In June 2018, Colombia's presidential election took place. After 8 years under Juan Manuel Santos, Colombia's new president is the [conservative Ivan Duque](#), member of the Democratic Center Party. "Timochenko" - the leader of the FARC - initially took part in the electoral process as a candidate (alongside the Revolutionary Alternative Force of the Common party), but he eventually [withdrew](#) due to protests and lack of citizen support. The FARC Peace Accord is now in the implementation phase and faces many challenges. One difficulty is the increased insecurity caused by the violence of dissident FARC guerrillas or those groups that have been strengthened (such as ELN) by the FARC giving up control of some areas.

As regards the National Liberation Army (ELN), former President Juan Manuel Santos and the ELN had been negotiating a peace deal since May 2018 in Cuba, but this process has now stalled. The new President, on whom it depends if the negotiations continue or not, had previously stated that he [considers](#) a unilateral truce necessary and an agreed location for talks with full international supervision. These are demands which ELN had rejected in the past. As of December 2018, the future of the process is still uncertain. The new president has however clearly [indicated](#) that he will not accept being intimidated by guerrilla violence to reach an agreement and that the dialogue table in Cuba will only be resumed if the guerrillas first release "all the hostages".

Another important aspect that has influenced the lack of speed in this peace process is the [Venezuelan crisis](#). From January to November 2018, around [1,032,016](#) Venezuelans entered Colombia seeking residency, according to figures published by the Office of Migration (2018). This means that extra economic [resources](#) are required to care for the influx. It also means that a larger pool of young people is available for enlisting in the ranks of various guerrilla groups. The border region is well-known for violence between groups competing for the control of drug trafficking and contraband activities.

The religious landscape

There are positive and negative aspects to the country's current religious landscape.

Positive aspects are:

- i) The [creation](#) of the Religious Affairs Coordination and the first national public policy for religious freedom and cults, which includes the participation of religious organizations in building peace and reconciliation in the country;
- ii) The strong and effective alliances within Christians groups, which have allowed them to make a clear stand on issues related to the defense of life, family and religious freedom in the public sphere. One example was the political coalition "Free Fair Colombia", a group of [31](#) different Christian churches (almost 500,000 voters) who played an important role in the last presidential elections by joining the political campaign of Iván Duque, trusting his promise to defend Christian values.

Negative aspects are:

- i) Organized crime and guerrillas continue to be one of the biggest Christian [persecutors](#) since threats and assassinations against Christian leaders as well as robberies of churches disrupt everyday church life. There has been no improvement in the corruption causing collusion between criminal groups and government authorities which leads to impunity and makes it even more difficult to provide effective protection for church work;
- ii) [Religious intolerance](#) driven by pressure groups (LGBTI, radical feminists etc.), government representatives, political parties and ordinary citizens causes public harassment through criticism, insults or defamation addressed to Christians, as well as the gradual imposition of an agenda - at a social and political level – that opposes Christian values;
- iii) Religious conversion within indigenous communities is still considered a cause for persecution.
- iv) Christians who supported conservative candidates suffered harassment and threats from criminal groups. These put pressure on Christians to vote for candidates supporting their illegal interests.

The political landscape

Ivan Duque won the presidential election in June 2018 with the support of the Democratic Center Party (led by former President Alvaro Uribe). It was the first election in a post-conflict scenario and no polling stations had to be moved for [security](#) reasons. Ivan Duque was one of the main opponents of the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC and there was a risk that the slow and complex peace-building process would be jeopardized by his election victory. However, after 100 days under the new government, the implementation of the peace agreements has continued. In general, there has been [progress](#) in implementing the peace accord, such as the handing over of weapons, the demobilization of guerrillas units, the establishment of the [Alternative Revolutionary Force for the Common People](#) political party and advances in the reintegration of FARC fighters into normal society. However, there are still serious challenges to overcome such as: allegations of [corruption](#) in the use of the Peace Funds, the alleged [return to drug trafficking](#) by Zeuxis Pausias Hernández Solarte (former FARC leader, known as Santrich), the internal discord within the Special Justice for Peace jurisdiction ([JPE](#)) and the delay in its operation, the strengthening of the so-called [FARC dissidence](#) (not to mention that some guerrilla units have emerged made up of ex-FARC members and leaders) and the lack of political [representation](#) for the victims of guerrilla violence in Congress. FARC is still on the US State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organization [list](#) which is why the US government is currently not assisting in the peace process.

Religious intolerance is also a factor on the political landscape. Christians within political parties have been harassed by other politicians and the media. Even a Christian presidential candidate was forced to [step down](#) from the electoral process. At the same time, Congress representatives suffer criticism and threats – even [death threats](#) - from pressure groups when they defend Christian values related to life and family or when they disagree with the approval of laws that oppose Christian values. An example of the latter occurred concerning regulations for [child euthanasia](#) set out by the Department for Health and Social Protection of Colombia, in which minors have been given the "right" to die with dignity, as long as they have a life-limiting condition, even without the permission of their parents if they have reached 14 years of age. Additionally, some state powers have [imposed](#) civic duties upon Christian leaders to the detriment of their religious duties.

It is also significant that, according to World Children's Report 2017, Colombia is one of 10 countries where children [suffer](#) most from conflict and have the highest rates of child homicide. Similarly, it is one of the countries in the region with the largest number of internally displaced persons. According to the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement, CODHES (2018), from 1 January - 31 August 2018, there were 126 incidents affecting [38,490](#) people, including 7,808 indigenous people. 72% of these incidents occurred in Norte de Santander, Antioquia and Nariño, and were caused by armed confrontation.

Finally, in the international context: Colombia [left](#) the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), claiming it was linked to "leftist populism advocated by the late Venezuelan leader [Hugo Chavez](#)". Colombia also became the [first](#) Latin American global partner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The socio-economic landscape

While it is true that the peace agreement with the FARC has helped to overcome some security issues in the country, it is important to realize that the process has also led to other equally serious problems, such as:

- i) The exponential increase in [growing](#) illicit crops. The annual data released by the White House Drug Policy Office (2018) stated that in 2017, rose 11% percent to 209,000 hectares (516,450 acres), the highest level for more than two decades, despite thousands signing substitution agreements to receive payments to help the transition from cultivating coca plants to growing new crops like cacao and avocados. This was one of the main points in the peace agreement, but it does not seem to be working.
- ii) The emergence of new armed groups (mostly made up of FARC's own [dissenting factions](#)) and the strengthening of old ones, such as the ELN, now Colombia's biggest guerrilla group. The government is currently evaluating whether or not to continue with negotiations towards a peace agreement with this group. There are also other groups, among them the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (or Clan del Golfo) and the Rastrojos. These criminal groups tend to be active in the forced recruitment of children and in enforcing restrictions on inhabitants, visitors, NGOs, state institutions and church leaders. Their presence has become one of the most serious post-conflict problems since they seem determined to take over activities previously carried out by the FARC.
- iii) The level of violence remains [high](#), as warned by the Security Council report of the UN (2018), particularly in Colombia's more neglected regions. The struggles with the peace process affects the basic economic, [health](#), [education](#) and even infrastructure needs. The indifference or inefficient attention of the authorities towards the presence of armed groups and drug traffickers in their communities makes life [unbearable](#), not to mention the soaring numbers of [murders](#). Community leaders, even leaders of indigenous councils, are seen as [obstacles](#) blocking criminal group profits and easily become targets for assassination. From January to August 2018, the consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement, CODHE (2018) stated that around [110](#) community leaders have being killed. Of the current large influx of Venezuelan migrants, many could well end up [becoming part](#) of these criminal groups, if there is no other employment to be found.

Regarding the impact of this situation on Christians: One of the first steps taken by guerrillas or criminal groups (when they take possession of a town or community for drug trafficking or plantation use) is to exert their authority over the local population. Above all, it is important for them to find allies - including the authorities - and to silence those who oppose them or those who try to expel them. Among this last group we find church leaders and other Christians who quickly become targets and victims of murder, abduction, robbery, death-threats, extortion and damaged property.

In addition to the problems mentioned above, religious intolerance has become rooted in society. It is common for ordinary citizens to criticize anyone harshly who expresses an opinion based on their Christian beliefs. Even educational institutions do not allow pupils to express their Christian faith and pressure-groups have threatened Christians and church leaders.

Despite such opposition, Colombian church leaders remain steadfast in their ministries, offering help and care for those who suffer the most. It should also be noted that the Catholic Church has taken on an active role in striving for peace in the country, as can be seen in the appointment of a [Bishops' Commission](#) to participate in dialogue with the ELN.

Concluding remarks

Colombia is in a stage of transition. The change in government has not yet managed to improve the implementation of the peace agreement with FARC, nor has it managed to make progress in dialogue with ELN guerrillas. Those are just a few of the many challenges facing the country as a whole. The economic crisis, the increase in violence and the lack of protection of Christian leaders and groups in the poorest and most vulnerable communities are other issues needing to be addressed. The Christian community recognizes it has a political role to play in the country and hopes that the new government will see that too and allow the churches to be fully involved in the long-awaited peace process in the country.

External Links - WWL 2019: Keys to understanding Colombia

- Recent country history: conservative Ivan Duque
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/dc-colombian-squares-off-against-former-guerrilla-as-colombians-vote/2018/06/17/ab8c213e-6d89-11e8-b4d8-eaf78d4c544c_story.html
- Recent country history: withdrew
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-43335878>
- Recent country history: considers
<https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/gobierno-de-colombia-y-el-n-cierran-ciclo-de-negociaci%C3%B3n-en-cuba-sin-cese-al-fuego/44294532>
- Recent country history: indicated
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-colombia-rebels/colombia-rebels-must-free-kidnapped-soldiers-police-duque-says-idUSKBN1KV2C4>
- Recent country history: Venezuelan crisis
https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/11/10/colombia/1510273722_065861.html

- Recent country history: 1,032,016
http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/latinoamerica/migracion-colombia-hay-218098-migrantes-venezolanos-con-estatus-irregular_259636
- Recent country history: resources
<https://noticiaalminuto.com/desvian-recursos-flujo-de-venezolanos-hacia-colombia-impacta-en-proceso-de-paz-con-farc/>
- The religious landscape: creation
<https://www.asuntoslegales.com.co/actualidad/creando-la-direccion-de-asuntos-religiosos-santos-celebra-libertad-religiosa-2745762>
- The religious landscape: 31
<https://www.colombiajustalibres.org/como-estamos-organizados/>
- The religious landscape: persecutors
<https://es.aleteia.org/2018/02/12/colombia-iglesia-al-elN-cesen-ya-el-terror-y-la-violencia/>
- The religious landscape: Religious intolerance
<https://larepublica.pe/mundo/1248447-colombia-ateos-agreden-piedras-iglesia-padre-chucho>
- The political landscape: security
<https://colombiacheck.com/chequeos/santos-pasa-la-cuenta-por-las-elecciones-mas-pacificas.html>
- The political landscape: progress
<http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/acuerdo-a-paso-lento-pero-seguro-AE8996075>
- The political landscape: Alternative Revolutionary Force for the Common People
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-41119001>
- The political landscape: corruption
<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/corruption-plagues-implementation-colombia-farc-peace-deal/>
- The political landscape: return to drug trafficking
<http://colombiapeace.org/2018/04/12/u-s-extradition-request-undermines-colombian-peace-processes/>
- The political landscape: JPE
<https://www.asfcanada.ca/en/actions/blogue/one-year-after-colombias-special-jurisdiction-for-peace-and-the-creation-of-transitional-justice-tribunals/>
- The political landscape: FARC dissidence
<https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/former-farc-combatant-killings-more-dissidency/>
- The political landscape: representation
<https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Victim-Representation-Needs-Congressional-Approval-Cepeda-20171213-0013.html>
- The political landscape: list
<https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

- The political landscape: step down
<https://www.colombia.com/elecciones/2018/viviane-morales-renuncia-a-su-candidatura-por-la-presidencia-de-colombia-188934>
- The political landscape: death threats
<https://www.aciprensa.com/noticias/diputada-cristiana-denuncia-amenazas-del-lobby-gay-en-colombia-22680>
- The political landscape: child euthanasia
<https://latinamericanpost.com/index.php/human-rights/20090-colombia-has-regulated-euthanasia-for-children-and-adolescents>
- The political landscape: imposed
<http://www.diarioconstitucional.cl/noticias/actualidad-internacional/2018/05/29/cc-de-colombia-rechazo-tutela-y-considera-que-un-sacerdote-catolico-no-puede-eludir-ser-jurado-de-votacion-para-elecciones-aduciendo-que-debe-oficiar-una-liturgia/>
- The political landscape: suffer
https://www.savethechildren.es/sites/default/files/imce/_stolen_childhoods_esp-vweb.pdf
- The political landscape: 38,490
<https://codhes.wordpress.com/2018/09/20/se-agrava-situacion-humanitaria-en-colombia/>
- The political landscape: left
<http://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-colombia-abandona-unasur-avisa-le-podrian-seguir-mas-estados-miembro-20180810193228.html>
- The political landscape: Hugo Chavez"
<http://en.mercopress.com/2018/04/21/unasur-under-pressure-six-nations-including-brazil-and-argentina-suspend-their-memberships>
- The political landscape: first
<https://es.panampost.com/felipe-fernandez/2018/06/25/la-adhesion-de-colombia-a-la-otan-es-una-barrera-contra-el-foro-de-sao-paulo/>
- The socio-economic landscape: growing
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/new-annual-data-released-white-house-drug-policy-office-shows-record-high-cocaine-cultivation-production-colombia/>
- The socio-economic landscape: dissenting factions
<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/colombia-peace/>
- The socio-economic landscape: high
<https://colombia.unmissions.org/nota-de-prensa-cuarto-informe-del-secretario-general-al-consejo-de-seguridad-sobre-la-misi%C3%B3n-de>
- The socio-economic landscape: health
<https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/opinion/que-espera-medicos-sin-fronteras-en-colombia-del-proximo-presidente>
- The socio-economic landscape: education
<http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/acuerdos-de-gobierno-y-farc/por-la-violencia-en-el-catatumbo-45-mil-estudiantes-dejaron-de-recibir-clases-ong-CH8977958>

- The socio-economic landscape: unbearable
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-08-06/-peace-brings-more-murder-and-cocaine-to-colombia-s-rebel-zones>
- The socio-economic landscape: murders
<https://www.worldcrunch.com/opinion-analysis/who-is-killing-colombia39s-community-organizers>
- The socio-economic landscape: obstacles
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-colombias-peace-deal-brings-a-new-season-of-fear-for-those-who-live/>
- The socio-economic landscape: 110
<https://codhes.wordpress.com/2018/09/20/se-agrava-situacion-humanitaria-en-colombia/>
- The socio-economic landscape: becoming part
<https://panampost.com/felipe-fernandez/2018/07/04/colombian-guerrilla-groups-recruit-desperate-venezuelans-to-fill-their-ranks/>
- The socio-economic landscape: Bishops' Commission
<http://especiales.presidencia.gov.co/Documents/20161104-dialogos-eIn/noticias/Comunicado-16-nov.pdf>

WWL 2019: Church History and Facts

How many Christians?

Pop 2018	Christians	Chr%
49,465,000	46,955,000	94.9

Source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A (eds.), *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed January 2018)

How did Christians get there?

Christianity came to Colombia through Spain's conquest and colonization in the period after 1492. The Roman Catholic Church was able to establish itself as the sole denomination. After Colombia gained independence in 1810, the Vatican in Rome established formal relations with the new state in 1835. The Roman Catholic Church took on an increasing political presence in the country which caused much friction with the political leaders of the time. As a result, the Church was persecuted and religious communities such as the Jesuits were expelled from the country in 1851 and 1861.

In 1877 the radical government's attempts to establish a "neutral" educational system degenerated into civil war with the active participation of several bishops and clerics. In 1886 the relationship between Church and State was settled in a new constitution which recognized the Catholic Church as the basis for national unity.

The loss of Catholic hegemony began with the arrival of the Presbyterian Church in the middle of the 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century Baptists and other Protestants arrived. In the 1960s the religious landscape began to change visibly due to social, economic and cultural changes caused by modernization, urbanization and literacy. Pentecostalism came from the United States and became very popular and this new Christian diversity was recognized in 1991 in the new constitution of Colombia.

What church networks exist today?

Church networks: Colombia	Christians	%
Orthodox	10,100	0.0
Catholic	43,435,000	92.5
Protestant	1,431,000	3.0
Independent	1,873,000	4.0
Unaffiliated	529,000	1.1
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-323,000	-0.7
Total	46,955,100	100.0
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	1,035,000	2.2
Renewalist movement	15,339,000	32.7

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: Believers 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.

Source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A (eds.), *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed January 2018)

According to the WCD 2018, Christians make up 94.9% of the population of the country, of which Catholics represent 92.5% and non-Catholics just over 8%. Interestingly, a report entitled “Pope Francis and Religion in Chile and Latin America Latinobarometro 1995-2017” (2018) [estimates](#) 14% of the Colombian population to be Protestant.

Religious context

Religious Context: Colombia	Numbers	%
Christians	46,955,000	94.9
Muslim	25,400	0.1
Hindu	12,000	0.0
Buddhist	2,100	0.0
Ethnoreligionist	313,000	0.6
Jewish	11,300	0.0
Bahai	78,600	0.2
Atheist	132,000	0.3
Agnostic	1,423,000	2.9
Other	513,100	1.0

OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.

Source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A (eds.), *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed January 2018)

Although Christians make up 94.9% of the population of the country, it is important to note that an estimated 3.2% of the population identify themselves as agnostic/atheist. This is an increase from the previous year's level of 2.97% and could be a reflection of the strong secular tendencies which have emerged in recent years.

Notes on the current situation

- Although Christian groups - especially Protestants – are currently influential in society, secular intolerance has grown in the country, due to misconceptions regarding the separation of Religion and State. There is great pressure from civil society, political authorities and pressure groups in the country to remove Christian voices from the political sphere. Instead, anti-Christian values are becoming accepted through promoting the LGBTI agenda calling for same-sex marriage and adoption and through promoting laws relating to child euthanasia.
- The peace agreement between the government and the FARC has led to the formation of dissident splinter groups and a strengthening of other guerrilla groups such as ELN, which stepped in to take over control of various regions. This spells danger for both ordinary civilians and community leaders, including Christian leaders. Church leaders are often the only form of authority present in an area; by being the first to reject the presence of these criminal groups, they often become the first to be threatened by them.
- In spite of the great risk to which they are subjected, Colombian church leaders continue to care for vulnerable sectors of society and play an active role in the peace-process wherever possible.

External Links - WWL 2019: Church History and Facts

- What church networks exist today?: estimates
https://www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/site/artic/20180112/asocfile/20180112124342/f00006494_religion_chile_america_latina_2017.pdf

WWL 2019: Short & Simple Persecution Profile

Introduction

Reporting period: 1 November 2017 - 31 October 2018

In WWL 2019 Colombia ranked 47, rising 2 points to a score of 58.

What type of persecution dominates?

Ethnic antagonism: According to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (2005), about [3.4 %](#) of the Colombian population consider themselves indigenous. Where members of the indigenous communities have converted to Christianity and have abandoned local syncretistic indigenous rites, they are often violently persecuted.

Organized corruption and crime: The lack of State protection in the most neglected regions of the country encourages the presence of criminal groups involved in drug trafficking, extortion and assassinations. Christians are often [affected](#).

Secular intolerance: Despite the current influence of Christians in politics (especially Protestants), government authorities are attempting to eradicate religion from the public domain and impose values that are contrary to the Christian faith (e.g. the LGBTI agenda).

Who is driving persecution?

Leaders of criminal groups and dissident guerrillas are the main agents of persecution. They often enjoy impunity due to corruption within the local authorities. In the same way, drug traffickers and criminal networks co-opt government officials to act against Christian groups who openly oppose their illegal practices. Also, in indigenous communities, where leaders perceive Christians as wanting to impose their worldview and take over their territory, Christians will suffer persecution (endorsed by the local or municipal authorities). Lastly, political parties, ordinary citizens and pressure groups reject faith-based opinions and try to enforce agendas which contradict Christian values.

What it results in

Church leaders are being threatened, harassed, extorted and even murdered as a result of the violence perpetrated by guerrillas or other criminal groups. In some cases, this violence is the direct result of church work among youth and former gang members. As a consequence of secular intolerance, Christian values are criticized and Christians are ridiculed when they try to participate in public debate - especially about issues concerning gender, marriage and unborn life. Finally, measures against indigenous converts to Christianity and their families or missionaries can involve imprisonment, physical abuse and the confiscation of property.

Violence

The following table is based on reported cases. Since many incidents go unreported, the numbers below must be understood as being minimum figures.

Colombia	Reporting period	Christians killed	Christians attacked	Christians arrested	Churches attacked	Christian-owned houses and shops attacked
WWL 2019	01 Nov 2017 - 31 Oct 2018	7	169	17	26	7
WWL 2018	01 Nov 2016 - 31 Oct 2017	5	274	6	32	13

Christians killed refers to the number of Christians killed for faith-related reasons (including state-sanctioned executions). Christians attacked refers to the number of Christians abducted, raped or otherwise sexually harassed, forced into marriage to non-Christians or otherwise physically or mentally abused (including beatings and death-threats) for faith-related reasons. Christians arrested refers to the number of Christians detained without trial or sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment or similar things for faith-related reasons. Churches attacked refers to the number of churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons. Christian-owned houses and shops attacked refers to the number of houses of Christians or other property (including shops and businesses of Christians) attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons.

Examples of specific persecution in the reporting period

- May 2018, Bogota: A Roman Catholic church was [attacked](#) "by a group of atheists". Stones were thrown, breaking windows and damaging property inside. The group is known to have harassed the Catholic diocese for weeks. During the attack the priest in charge sought refuge in a relative's house due to threats made against him.
- July 2018, Medellin: A 50 years old Roman catholic priest was found murdered in his apartment. He was well-known in the community for his [social work](#).
- July 2018, Cordoba: In the community of Embera Katio in the town of Guaranini, the indigenous authorities expelled the pastors who lived there because they did not want them to continue their evangelizing work.
- September 2018, Antioquia: The pastor of the New Philadelphia church was [shot dead](#) by an armed criminal group after he refused to transport them by canoe on a Sunday.

External Links - WWL 2019: Short & Simple Persecution Profile

- What type of persecution dominates?: 3.4 %
https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2005/etnia/sys/visibilidad_estadistica_etnicos.pdf
- What type of persecution dominates?: affected
<http://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Latin-America-Organized-corruption-and-crime-2018.pdf>
- Examples of specific persecution in the reporting period: attacked
<https://larepublica.pe/mundo/1248447-colombia-ateos-agreden-piedras-iglesia-padre-chucho>

- Examples of specific persecution in the reporting period: social work
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/35358>
- Examples of specific persecution in the reporting period: shot dead
<https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/09/24/press/4079/article.htm>

WWL 2019: Persecution Dynamics

Introduction

Reporting period: 1 November 2017 - 31 October 2018

Position on World Watch List (WWL)

In WWL 2019, Colombia ranked 47, rising 2 points to a score of 58. Violence against Christians increased (especially in rural areas) mainly due to attacks by criminal groups and dissident FARC guerrilla factions. Attacks occurred particularly where Christians expressed socio-political views contrary to the interests of the criminal gangs. This sort of hostility also affected urban areas, causing an increase in pressure in the *National sphere of life*.

Persecution engines

Persecution engines: Colombia	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Not at all
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethnic antagonism	EA	Medium
Denominational protectionism	DPR	Very weak
Communist and post - Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Medium
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Not at all
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Strong

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 (long version).

Organized corruption and crime (Strong):

The Corruption Perception [Index 2017](#) ranks Colombia 96th out of 180, with a 37/100 score (0= highly corrupt and 100= very clean). Despite the signing of the peace agreements with the FARC, criminal and guerrilla groups still control entire regions. FARC dissidents, members of the ELN and other guerrilla groups (often referred to as "[BACRIM](#)") control criminal activities in various territories. However, their current lack of structure and clear strategy is causing greater uncertainty and fear among the general population than previously under FARC. Church leaders and groups who disagree with their practices, denounce them and try to prevent young people from joining their ranks or cause guerrilla members to convert to Christian faith, suffer harassment, arrest, abduction, extortion and are even killed. All of this is possible due to the corruption and impunity caused by the alliances between the leaders of these groups and government authorities. This was evident during the last electoral process: Criminal groups tried to force the population, including Christians and the Church, to vote for candidates who supported the continuation of the corrupt regime.

While indigenous communities are often most affected by organized crime since their territory is commonly co-opted by drug traffickers and guerrillas, some indigenous leaders use criminal members to intimidate indigenous Christians, in order to pressurize them into renouncing their faith. Further, the level of violence in such places is also very high as a result of clashes between government troops and criminal groups or due to fighting between criminal groups. Given such violence, Colombia is known as one of the countries in the region with the [most](#) internally displaced people (38,490 from

January to August 2018) as stated by the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement, COHDES (2018). Entire indigenous families are sometimes controlled by paramilitary groups.

Ethnic antagonism (Medium)

This is one of the main engines of persecution within indigenous communities in the north of the country (Arauca, Norte de Santander, Magdalena, Cordoba). According to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (2005), about [3.4 %](#) of the Colombian population regard themselves as indigenous; in their communities the religious factor is an important component of their culture and identity and shapes their relationships with other people and even natural resources. As in many indigenous communities in Latin America, the religious practices are mostly related to Catholic syncretic practices. Although they cannot be identified as Roman Catholics (in the real sense of the word), there is a tendency for the community leaders to be more tolerant towards the Roman Catholic Church than with Christians from other churches. However, this does not mean that indigenous Catholics who abandon these practices (religious conversion) will not be persecuted and become victims of Ethnic antagonism.

Since, there is a strong religious presence in these communities due to the indigenous influence of [Cosmovision](#) on their daily life, both private and social, the introduction of an idea or custom contrary to these ancient beliefs is seen as a threat to their traditions (cultural or religious) and is consequently banned by local authorities and most indigenous community leaders. Measures against indigenous converts to Christianity (and also their families and missionaries) can be imprisonment, physical abuse, denying access to basic goods and the confiscation of property.

Secular intolerance (Medium):

Christians have demonstrated that they have considerable influence in the political life of the country despite attempts - at all levels – to eradicate religion from the public domain. Christians struggle with verbal attacks and discrimination as a result of their Christian faith-based opinions, especially in matters relating to life, family, marriage and religious liberty. The intimidation does not derive from a desire to be neutral but from the intention to impose values that contradict the Christian faith (e.g. the LGBTI and radical feminist agenda).

In order to achieve greater recognition of all religious denominations, even minorities, the government has made important progress in approving public policies concerning religious liberty, not to mention the implementation of the Religious Affairs Coordination. It is not yet possible to evaluate how effective the new regulations are with regard to the protection of the different religions in the country. However, religious intolerance among private institutions and ordinary citizens, who mock and criticize anyone openly expressing their Christian faith, is a serious issue in the country.

Drivers of persecution

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

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 (long version).

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime:

Despite the peace agreement with the FARC, there are still isolated areas in which paramilitary and guerrilla forces other than FARC (e.g. ELN and smaller criminal groups known as "Bacrim") have taken over entire communities neglected by the government. These groups do not hesitate to take action against Christians whose values openly contradict those practiced by these groups. Due to corruption and impunity, criminal networks (especially those involved in drug trafficking) have been supported and protected by government officials (at various levels) and political parties, as happened in the last election. Also, citizens living in areas co-opted by criminal groups, in some cases family members, are often forced to collaborate (or turn a blind eye) when church leaders and Christian groups are targeted.

Drivers of Ethnic antagonism:

The main drivers in this category are ethnic group leaders and non-Christian religious leaders within indigenous communities. They remain loyal to their ancestral beliefs and restrict any spreading of Christian faith among their tribes through harassment, threats (sometimes via witchcraft), violence or by reporting Christians to the municipal and local authorities. The latter collaborate by either allowing or ignoring discrimination and violence aimed at Christians. In cases of conversion, citizens (and sometimes the convert's own family) are likely to view a convert's change of faith as betrayal of family and community traditions and tribal values. This means that – where a convert is mistreated or expelled - both family and community agree with the verbal and physical violence taken against the Christian. In addition, members of criminal groups also threaten Christians in local communities at the request of indigenous leaders.

Drivers of Secular intolerance:

Government officials, ideological pressure groups, citizens' coalitions and multilateral organizations (such as UN and OAS) have pushed the government into adhering to their agenda and postulates (e.g. LGBTI philosophy and sexual reproductive rights) not to mention the constant harassment and ridicule targeting leaders in politics and society when expressing their Christians beliefs publicly. Some political parties - especially the progressive ones - have constantly tried to obstruct efforts coming from Christian politicians or that are supported by Christian groups. Often national media is used for this purpose through smear campaigns or for spreading biased information, discrediting Christians and Christian faith in general.

Context

Colombia is going through a time of transition. The new president has as a list of major challenges to face which include keeping the peace agreements on course, implementing effective measures to eradicate corruption, overcoming the economic crisis, guaranteeing the human rights of citizens (especially in indigenous communities), and putting into practice public policies on freedom of religion. Probably the main problem to address is the level of violence and insecurity caused by guerrilla and criminal groups - especially the ELN - trying to take over the businesses and territories left by the FARC. There is the very real possibility that the FARC (or at least many of its former members) will join other guerrilla groups, due to the lack of resources provided by the State for their reintegration into Colombian society. Either way, the escalation of violence worsens the situation for Christians living in the areas controlled by these groups. In addition, due to corruption, political leaders are often involved in alliances with criminal groups making it dangerous for Christians to speak out against what is happening in their communities.

Despite all these struggles, public Christian participation is on the increase, which is especially visible in politics. The support of a Christian evangelical coalition influenced the results of the last presidential elections. It is to be hoped that this was not simply the political manipulation of the Christian electorate.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians are not forced into isolation. These communities are therefore not scored as a separate category.

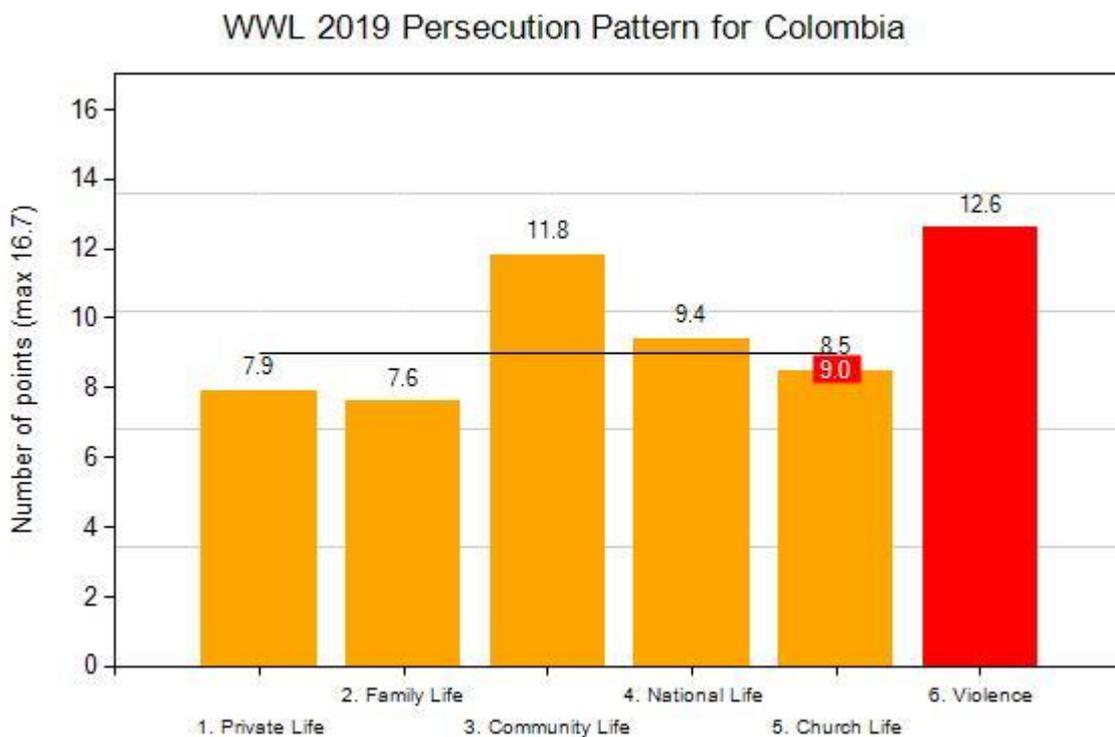
Historical Christian communities: This category consists mainly of Roman Catholic churches and small Orthodox and Protestant communities. These groups are in danger of attack in areas controlled by drug cartels and other forms of organized crime,. They also struggle with the increasing secularism and

religious intolerance, not to mention the obstacles and risks involved in church work within indigenous communities.

Converts: This category includes cross-denominational converts from historical Christian communities, but also converts within indigenous communities, ex-guerrilla militants and former members of criminal organizations who have converted to Christianity. They are victims of harassment, expulsion, death threats and other physical and psychological forms of violence for abandoning the majority belief-system within the community to which they belong. They are also affected by criminal networks in the same way as Historical Christian communities.

Non-traditional Christian communities: This category is mainly made up of Evangelical, Baptist and Pentecostal congregations. These denominations do not receive the same government benefits granted to the country's historical churches. They are affected by drug cartels etc. in the same way as Historical Christian communities.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence



The WWL 2019 Persecution pattern for Colombia shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Colombia remains at a high level, rising from 8.9 in WWL 2018 to 9.0 in WWL 2019.
- Pressure is strongest in the *Community sphere* with 11.8 points, caused mainly by the influence of the Persecution engines *Organized corruption and crime* and *Ethnic antagonism* and by the weak implementation of the Peace Agreement with FARC guerrilla group. The two engines mentioned often work together, for instance where criminal groups conspire with indigenous tribal leaders against Christians. This interaction occurs at the local community level, so pushing up the score for pressure in the *Community sphere*.

- The increase in pressure in *National Life* (from 8.6 in WWL 2018 to 9.4 in WWL 2019) reflects how government authorities have not only failed to protect Christian minorities, but are also showing signs of intolerance towards manifestations of Christian faith in the public sphere.
- The score for violence is at an extreme level (12.6), an increase compared to the 11.9 points scored in WWL 2018. The increase is mainly due to the high number of violent incidents against Christians occurring in indigenous communities and also reflects the activities of criminal groups operating in the country.

Private sphere:

Most points in this *sphere of life* were scored in the context of indigenous communities and in areas co-opted by criminal networks, often affecting converts in particular. These Christians must practice their religion in secret, since Christian literature, symbols and values are unacceptable for tribal people. A convert's family has been one of the main drivers of persecution due to its loyalty to the local community. Similarly, in those areas co-opted by criminal groups, Christians do not enjoy the freedom to share their expressions of faith with others (even in private) as a result of curfews and threats. In addition, in the context of society's growing rejection of individual religious practices, those who reveal their faith-based points of views tend to be criticized, insulted and bullied.

Family sphere:

Especially in indigenous communities, the family's top priority is to be part of the community, to belong to the "clan" and to respect the community's customs above all else. Thus, any religious practice that is alien to the traditional/tribal way of life is prohibited. Christian families and Christian converts within tribal families struggle to practice their faith freely. In order to carry out baptisms, Christian weddings and burials, Christians must leave the indigenous territory. If they do not, they run the risk of being imprisoned, physically abused, denied access to community services (including cemeteries) and - in the case of mixed marriages - of forced divorce. Christian parents are likely to be threatened if they are found raising their children according to the Christian faith. They then face fines, detentions and the possible loss of custody of their children.

Also, in those areas co-opted by criminal organizations, both boys and girls suffer from criminal indoctrination and any opposition from Christian parents can lead to their assassination. The government has also been attempting contrary to Christian values is still present, such as the recent efforts to allowing [child euthanasia](#), nonetheless, thanks to the Christian parent's activism, this situation in this regard – at least- has not worsening.

Community sphere:

Within indigenous communities, Christians refusing to participate in community religious practices are threatened and prevented from carrying out their daily activities. Christian converts are denied assembly voting rights and the right of access to community resources, sometimes including government health, educational or economic programs. Community members are also forbidden employ indigenous Christians. The ultimate goal for communal leaders is to force Christians to renounce their faith and return to the religious practices of the ethnic group.

In areas controlled by criminal networks, Christians represent a challenge to the "authority" of the local criminal groups who react by using threats and force where their illegal interests are openly

opposed. For instance, these groups often control who finds or loses employment. They expect complicity in crime through collaboration and the financing of their activities.

There are also progressive efforts to restrict the participation of Christians who speak publicly against secular and ideological agendas. It is common for mobs, ideological pressure groups and the media to [harass](#) public figures who speak out on issues related to their Christian values and faith. Even normal citizens are known to demonstrate intolerance through attacks on [churches](#) or Christian [views](#) on protecting life, family and marriage.

National sphere:

The Colombian Constitution guarantees and protects the right of religious freedom and conscientious objection, and the State recognizes religious pluralism through the [creation](#) of the Department for religious affairs. However, in practice, there is a long way to go. To date, the State still does not always permit exemption from military service based on religious grounds. Some health professionals have to perform procedures (or make referrals to other professionals) which go against their faith. Also, within the army, police force and other public institutions, traditional Protestant and non-traditional churches find their pastoral work severely limited. Finally, in most indigenous communities tribal “law” effectively rules. This usually means that Christians are censored, forbidden from entering or exiting their territories and are expected to participate in community religious rites. It is hardly possible for persecuted indigenous Christians to request protection from the government since the indigenous authorities - which are almost always biased against Christians - are the only authorities with jurisdiction in the area.

In those areas co-opted by criminal networks, Christians can be placed under curfew, prevented from obtaining or retaining public or private employment (especially if such positions endanger the illegal activities of such groups), and pressurized into voting for candidates known to support criminal group interests. In the 2018 election there were [accusations](#) that in some areas a significant number of votes were not counted due to collusion between the authorities and criminal groups.

Further examples of challenges to Christians at the national sphere are: i) Churches have been fined for excessive [noise](#) at their church services; ii) There are attempts to promote anti-Christian values, with city councils claiming complete neutrality, yet raising [LGBTI flags](#) in recognition of the ideology of this community; iii) The constitutional court [forces](#) church leaders to carry out civic duties (such as being part of a voting jury) to the detriment of their church responsibilities; and iv) Congress [rejected](#) the holding of a referendum on laws concerning adoption by same-sex couples. Christians are often restricted from bringing faith-based opinions into public discussion and face discrimination in issues relating to life, family and marriage.

Church sphere:

In indigenous communities, churches are almost always forced to hold worship services in secret. Most of the time it is impossible for churches or Christian meeting places to be built, making it hard to organize Christian activities. Further, the first steps in the implementation of the peace agreement with FARC have not been enough to make a countrywide free and secure exercise of religious freedom possible. On the contrary, the rearmament and participation of some former members of the FARC in other

guerrilla groups has caused greater insecurity in areas under guerrilla control: More church leaders are facing fines, extortion, threats and assassination than before. Especially church youth-work is under constant surveillance. Also, in political discussions, Christians are sometimes accused of engaging in "political proselytism", and often they are viewed as untrustworthy for handling political affairs since they are deemed likely to use religion for manipulating people.

It is also worth mentioning the role played by the Church in the context of the Venezuelan crisis: Particularly in the border regions, church communities are often the only source of help for desperate migrants escaping either from the government crisis in Venezuela or from criminal groups located in the Ecuadorian or Venezuelan border area.

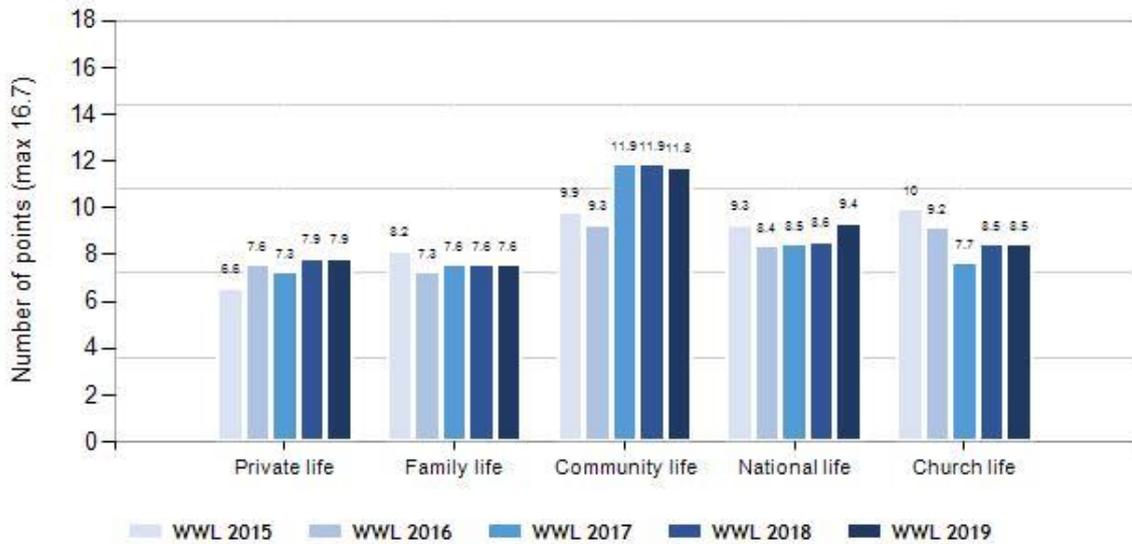
Violence:

In the WWL 2019 reporting period, religious intolerance, criminal violence, corruption and insecurity in the country have all contributed to the [murder](#) of Roman Catholic priests, the [robbery](#) of churches and [death threats](#) aimed at Christians. Violence has also intensified in indigenous communities, where Christians have experienced discrimination, expropriation of property, harassment, deprivation of liberty, denial of food and basic goods and physical abuse. For a summary of the statistics on violence and examples, please see the Short and Simple Persecution Profile section above.

5 Year trends

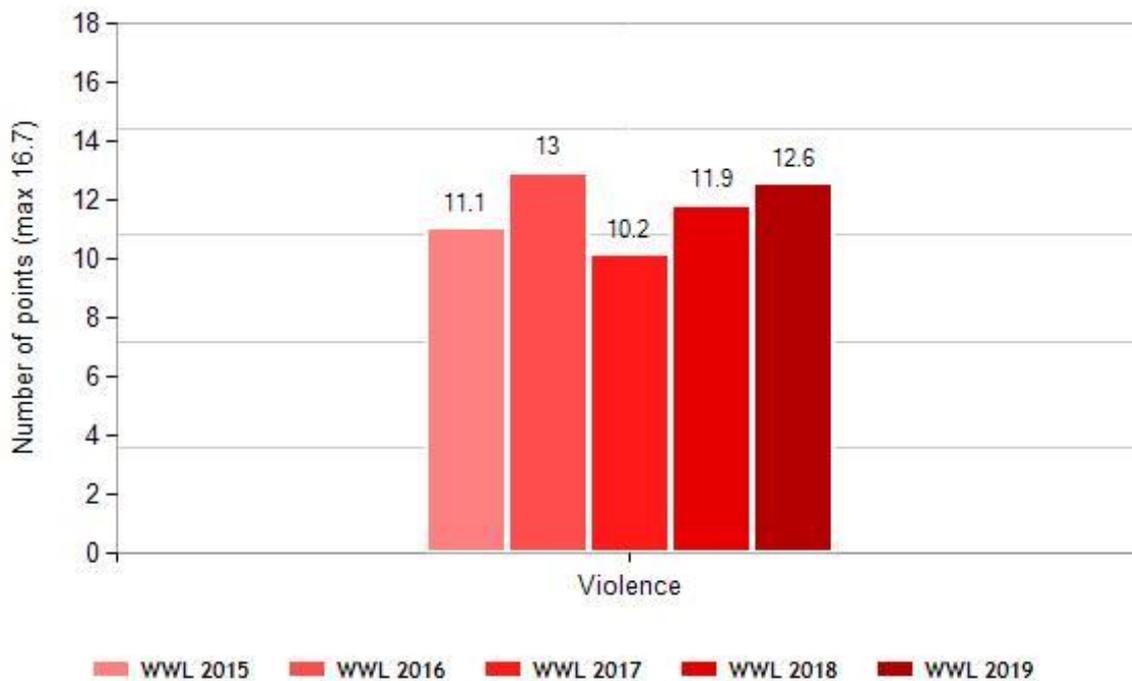
In general, the levels of pressure in all *spheres of life* show a certain stability over the last three reporting periods (Chart 1). Pressure in the *Church sphere* has shown an overall reduction since WWL 2015, in contrast to the *Community sphere of life* which has increased and become stable at a very high level. The stability mentioned above is reflected in Chart 2, where the average pressure has remained at a high level, ranging between 8.4 and 9.0 points. Chart 3 shows that in the past five reporting periods, there was only one period where the violence score was not at an extreme level. The lower (but still very high) score in WWL 2017 is probably a reflection of the FARC Peace Agreement negotiation process when at least some criminal groups ceased attacking the Church. The scores for violence have since then increased each year, with the score of 12.6 in WWL 2019 almost as high as the peak level of 13.0 in WWL 2016.

WWL 2015 - WWL 2019 Persecution Profile for Colombia (Spheres of life)



WWL 2015 - WWL 2019 Persecution Pattern history: Colombia	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2019	9.0
2018	8.9
2017	8.6
2016	8.4
2015	8.8

WWL 2015 - WWL 2019 Persecution Profile for Colombia (Violence)



Gender specific persecution

Female:

There is no particular law or practice enforced nationally that puts girls/women in specific danger. However, in practice, there are situations in which Christian women have to overcome [challenges](#) in order to live their faith without fear. For instance, within indigenous communities, since tribal authorities do not accept the Christian faith, it is common for Christian women to be either forced into marriage with a non-Christian indigenous man or be abandoned by their husbands, separated from their children and ostracized by the community. This puts them in a particularly vulnerable situation since they are exposed to forced displacement and possibly also criminal groups involved in trafficking and sexual exploitation. In cases where Christian women remain in the community, they have to comply with the community practices, despite their faith. For instance, in the Embera indigenous communities of the municipalities of Pueblo Rico and Mistrató in Risaralda and the municipality of Trujillo in the Valle del Cauca, they are exposed to [female genital mutilation](#).

In areas under criminal control, the guerrilla indoctrination of children affects Christian girls more, since they not only have to accept the violent ideologies imposed despite their faith, but it is also highly likely that they become victims of [rape](#) and sexual harassment. Also, in the most neglected areas, government programs are sponsored by multilateral organizations to insist on "family planning" resources being used that most often involve contraceptives and abortion. Consequently, only these options are made available to Christian women to safeguard their health, thus forcing them indirectly to give up their beliefs because they think there is no other option.

Lastly, in some professions it is more difficult for Christian women to find work or to be promoted, since it is known that they are likely have more pregnancies and children than non-Christian women. Employers often see this as an inconvenience they are not willing to bear.

Male:

There is no law making Christian men more vulnerable to persecution. However, in the areas controlled by criminal groups or drug cartels, young men are exposed to indoctrination and mandatory participation in these groups. Due to the economic and social context, some young men accept this and join up. However, there are others who refuse - whether on grounds of faith or otherwise - and these are then commonly threatened, persecuted and often abducted along with their families.

Persecution of other religious minorities

According to WCD 2018, there are various religious minority groups in the country such as Muslims (0.051%), Hindus (0.024%), Bahai (0.16%) and Jews (0.02%). There are also Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Mennonites. According to the [International Freedom Report for 2017](#), Mennonites and others have received threats from criminal groups and there have been some forced displacements. Also a case was reported about a Jewish lady who was [fired](#) for refusing to make the Catholic sign of the cross during a live TV show.

Example: In March 2018, a Jewish lady was [fired](#) for refusing to make the Catholic sign of the cross during a live TV show.

Future outlook

The political outlook: The uncertainty surrounding the peace-building process in the country can lead not only to ex-FARC members regrouping or joining other guerrilla groups, but it can also block progress in negotiations with other important guerrilla groups such as the ELN. This uncertainty will have a negative affect on the economic and social situation and cause corruption among the country's authorities to continue undiminished.

The outlook for Christians - through the lens of:

- **Organized corruption and crime:** The State will need to implement effective measures to counter the increase in violence in areas co-opted by newly formed guerrilla groups and by networks of organized crime and drug trafficking. If this does not happen, these areas are likely to become a breeding ground for the persecution of religious communities, especially Christians.
- **Ethnic antagonism:** As long as the State continues to ignore and even defend the mistreatment of indigenous converts to Christian faith, this persecution is likely to remain unchanged. If the State cannot control the violence in these areas, most indigenous communities run the risk of disappearing, along with their culture.
- **Secular intolerance:** Despite the momentary rise in Christian influence in political issues, intolerance against Christian faith is likely to increase among the country. As has happened in other countries in the region, Christian groups will simply be used as a means of support in political campaigns only to be ignored once the winner assumes power.

Conclusion: The security crisis is likely to increasingly endanger the living conditions of most Christians, especially since the government has not yet recognized them as a group worthy of special protection in the country.

External Links - WWL 2019: Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines: Index 2017
<https://www.transparency.org/country/COL>
- Persecution engines: BACRIM
<https://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/bacrim-and-their-position-in-colombia-underworld/>
- Persecution engines: most
<https://codhes.wordpress.com/2018/09/20/se-agrava-situacion-humanitaria-en-colombia/>
- Persecution engines: 3.4 %
https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2005/etnia/sys/visibilidad_estadistica_etnicos.pdf
- Persecution engines: Cosmovision
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesoamerican_cosmovision
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: child euthanasia
<https://latinamericanpost.com/index.php/human-rights/20090-colombia-has-regulated-euthanasia-for-children-and-adolescents>

- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: harass
<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/lideres-evangelicos-aseguran-que-hay-una-persecucion-contr-el-pastor-arrazola/519272>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: churches
<https://www.publimetro.co/co/bogota/2018/05/24/amenazaron-de-muerte-al-padre-chucho.html>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: views
<http://www.chvnoticias.cl/lo-mejor-de-internet/internet-famosa-youtuber-fue-criticada-por-comentarios-sobre-lgbt/2018-03-08/181103.html>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: creation
<https://www.asuntoslegales.com.co/actualidad/creando-la-direccion-de-asuntos-religiosos-santos-celebra-libertad-religiosa-2745762>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: accusations
<https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/los-votos-que-no-le-aparecen-colombia-justa-libres-articulo-744884>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: noise
<http://www.elpais.com.co/cal/ruido-en-iglesias-genero-47-quejas-ciudadanas-en.html>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: LGBTI flags
<https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/bolivar/comunidad-evangelica-rechaza-bandera-lgbti-en-fachada-de-la-alcaldia-de-cartagena-articulo-722614>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: forces
<http://www.diarioconstitucional.cl/noticias/actualidad-internacional/2018/05/29/cc-de-colombia-rechazo-tutela-y-considera-que-un-sacerdote-catolico-no-puede-eludir-ser-jurado-de-votacion-para-elecciones-aduciendo-que-debe-oficiar-una-liturgia/>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: rejected
<http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/congreso/se-hunde-proyecto-para-convocar-referendo-que-impedia-adopcion-gay-86736>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: murder
<https://www.el-carabobeno.com/asesinado-sacerdote-jubilado-exalcalde-noroeste-colombia/>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: robbery
<http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/cal/monjas-asustadas-por-serie-de-robos-en-convento-de-cal-244564>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence: death threats
http://caracol.com.co/emisora/2018/05/02/bucaramanga/1525223055_404730.html
- Gender specific persecution: challenges
<http://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/COLOMBIA-Compound-structural-vulnerabilities-facing-Christian-women-2018-FINAL-WITH-PREFACE.pdf>
- Gender specific persecution: female genital mutilation.
<https://www.kienyke.com/historias/colombia-ablacion-mutilacion-femenida>

- Gender specific persecution: rape
<https://www.infobae.com/america/colombia/2018/08/26/el-calvario-de-nidia-el-drama-de-las-ninas-reclutadas-y-violadas-por-las-farc-que-aun-no-termina/>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: International Freedom Report for 2017
<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/281304.pdf>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: fired
<https://www.jpost.com/International/Colombian-Jewish-news-anchor-refused-to-cross-herself-forced-to-resign-546737>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: fired
<https://www.jpost.com/International/Colombian-Jewish-news-anchor-refused-to-cross-herself-forced-to-resign-546737>

Additional Reports and Articles

WWR in-depth reports

A selection of in-depth reports is available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/> (password: freedom).

Open Doors article(s) from the region

A selection of articles is available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/articles/> (password freedom).

World Watch Monitor news articles

Use the country search function at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/>

Recent country developments

Use the country search function at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/> (password: freedom).