FINAL WWL 2019 COUNTRY DOSSIER

KENYA

LEVEL 3/EMBARGO

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

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Access to Country Dossiers with track changes

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https://zinniaprod.globalpoint.info/worldwatchlist/countrydossierversionhistory/6282bf24-d085-e811-ae16-001b21d895d0

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Introduction

World Watch List Kenya	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2019	61	40
WWL 2018	62	32
WWL 2017	68	18
WWL 2016	68	16
WWL 2015	63	19

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 Kenya

Link for general background information
BBC country profile: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13682176

Recent country history
Since the nation's founding in 1964, tribal-based politics continues to serve as the dominant political trend in the country. However, the new constitution in 2010, the peaceful elections of March 2013 when Uhuru Kenyatta (the son of Kenya's first president) won the vote for the presidential office, and the devolution of power into a county system, have all helped mitigate some of the tension arising from the ethno-based politics. On a backdrop of serious socio-economic challenges (see below) the increasing incursions of al-Shabaab militants and the general instability in Somalia is a major security concern, particularly in the light of the attacks in 2013-2015 in Nairobi and the north-east, especially the attack on Garissa University in April 2015. It is expected that civil unrest and anti-corruption, anti-government sentiment will grow significantly as corruption remains endemic and highly visible. Against this backdrop, devolution of power from the center to localities could be a positive step forward in bringing a regionally more equal level of development and political stability with regards to the country's historic ethnic tensions.

A major event in 2017 were the general elections held in August. After the Kenyan Supreme Court annulled the result, repeat elections were held in October 2017, again with President Uhuru Kenyatta leading in the polls. The elections were carried out peacefully (in contrast to the 2007 elections which resulted in heated tensions escalating to violence and resulting in deaths of over 1,200 people). This election is therefore also a milestone in working towards a form of reconciliation of the different ethnic groups in Kenya. Also, in 2018, both president and main opposition leader announced that they had agreed to work together.

The religious landscape
Kenya is a majority Christian country with Christians making up more than 80% of the population. The Muslim population is well under 10% and groups constituting less than 2% of the population include Hindus, Sikhs, and Bahai. Much of the remaining 4-5% of the population adhere to various traditional religious beliefs.

In the predominantly Muslim areas along the coast, a new political movement, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) has created a toxic environment. This movement provides a voice for long-standing grievances regarding the region's marginalization and lack of state investment. The group's goal appears to be primarily political and concerned with secession, according to government sources. Moreover, its members seem to maintain a public commitment to non-violence, but they have been linked by the government to violent radical Islamic elements in the coastal regions. In 2013, they were blamed for several violent attacks, but it is not clear if they were actually behind them. In addition, anti-government sentiment among Muslim youths in the region has been increasing. As a result of this, the economy of Mombasa has been hit hard, with foreign tourists avoiding the city as it is considered unsafe. Possibly affiliated with the MRC, there is also the more dangerous Muslim Youth Center (MYC), a.k.a. al-Hijra, which has definite links to al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab. Based in Mombasa and along the coast, the group was initially established in 2008 in the slums of Nairobi as a reaction to the perceived marginalization of young Muslims in Kenya. Slowly the group became radicalized by perceived injustices and Kenya's invasion of Somalia; it is considered al-Shabaab's most important regional ally.

One of the group's central aims is to expand the war in Somalia to Kenya by encouraging violent action in the country. The MYC has claimed responsibility for several attacks in the country, some of which have been carried out in cooperation with al-Shabaab.

The political landscape

Currently, Kenya is not considered to be a true electoral democracy and has seen a relative decline in political and civil liberties. This decline occurred as a parallel development to the ethnic and religious tensions and incidents of violence across the country following the 2007-2008 elections and in advance of the elections held in 2013. In terms of its level of democracy, Kenya is ranked at the lower end of the "hybrid regimes", showing it to be more democratic than authoritarian regimes, but not as democratic as "flawed democracies". It seems that elections are typically not truly free and fair due to corruption, vote-buying and lack of institutional capacity. The rule of law and civil society is weak, and the judiciary is not considered entirely independent. However, it is believed that despite these weaknesses, the country has been making progress following the 2010 constitutional referendum.

With regard to the Constitution, several provisions have been amended recently to ensure civil liberties. For example, freedom of speech and press has been strengthened. Under Article 8, the Constitution, clearly lays out that the State has no official state religion. Article 32 of the Constitution provides for freedom of religion, the right to assemble with others to manifest their religion through worship, practice, teaching or observance, including observance of a day of worship and that a person shall not be compelled to act, or engage in any act, that is contrary to the person's belief or religion. It also provides under Article 27(4) for the equality of all persons and equal access to and benefits from the law with no adverse distinction based on religion. As a result of this, many things have started changing: Kenya's press environment remains one of the most vibrant in all of Africa and many privately-owned media outlets are known for routinely criticizing the government and officials. Also, the independence of the judiciary has been strengthened, which was previously subservient to the executive branch. Moreover, the Islamic (Kadhi) court system is subordinate to the superior courts of Kenya and is reserved for those who profess the Muslim religion and who voluntarily submit to the courts' jurisdiction. Kadhi courts only adjudicate cases related to personal status, marriage, divorce or inheritance. Lastly, freedom of religion appears to be widely respected by the government, although some Muslim groups complain about unequal development opportunities and religion-based discrimination. However, civil liberties and the rule of law are being eroded by several factors, such as deeply entrenched official and societal corruption and an ineffective police force. This contributes to crime being seriously underreported, and domestic violence, trafficking and forced labor typically not being investigated. It has even enabled terrorists to transport weapons and ammunition in and out of the country undetected.

The socio-economic landscape

Kenya's economy is the largest and most diverse in East Africa and it serves as a regional financial and transportation hub. Nevertheless, Kenya is also one of the poorest countries in the world and is considered to have "low development", according to the United Nations' human development index. Economic growth, hampered for decades by government mismanagement and corruption, was improving before the post-election instability in 2007. Then the economy was hit hard by the global economic downturn and the 2011-2012 East African drought. Yet, Kenya is considered to be one of the fastest growing economies in Sub-Saharan Africa and a hotbed of technological innovation. Kenya has been one of the only African countries to invent and produce models of computers and cars. Despite this, the economic growth remains inadequate to significantly address the nation's endemic poverty and high level of unemployment. Moreover, high levels of corruption, coupled with (and resulting in)

inadequate infrastructure, are the primary impediments to job creation and poverty eradication. Due to a burgeoning youth population, growing urbanization will likewise place greater pressure on the government to address the needs of those in the impoverished city slums. Drought conditions and the development of oil resources also have an impact on the tensions among the rural population, national economy and the overall political environment.

One of the main challenges for Christians and the government of Kenya in addressing social and economic issues is the presence of Islamic militant groups. The Islamist group al-Shabaab is the biggest threat and leading *Driver of persecution* in Kenya. The group, which has reportedly killed more people than any other militant group in Africa through its attacks in Somalia and Kenya, has shown great resilience despite an increase in government army pressure and economic setbacks. The fact that al-Shabaab is deeply embedded in communities in Somalia makes it very difficult to uproot; however, an increased military presence and foreign coordination to strengthen the gathering of intelligence in Kenya has resulted in a reduction in the level of attacks. Hotspots for al-Shabaab attacks include Mombasa, Mandera, Garissa, Wajir, Lamu and Tana River.

The growth in the economy has a direct impact on the improvement of lives and access to education. In some areas, access to education has reduced the attraction of radical Islamic tendencies among the youth.

Concluding remarks

For many decades Kenya was seen as a stable country and regional model. However, things started falling apart mid-2005. In 2007/8, the post-election violence made Kenya an example of how costly in human lives post-election violence can be. The domestic situation is exacerbated by the rise of Islamic militancy in the region. This is also compounded by the emergence of radical groups in the country which have been serving al-Shabaab through recruiting fighters from Kenya. The activities of militant groups have turned Kenya into a country where Christians regularly face deadly attacks because of their faith. This has forced the Kenyan government to send troops into Somalia to combat al-Shabaab, but that has not stopped al-Shabaab from carrying out deadly attacks against Christians. The general political environment in the country is volatile, despite the fact that the 2017 elections proceeded peacefully. In the WWL 2019 reporting period, however, coordinated attacks decreased in number and intensity. Yet Christians living in and around the north-eastern part of the country still have to live with the fear that they can be targeted at any time.

External Links - WWL 2019: Keys to understanding Kenya

- Recent country history: agreed to work together
  https://www.dw.com/en/political-confusion-reigns-in-kenya-after-odinga-kenyatta-deal/a-42958386

WWL 2019: Church History and Facts

How many Christians?

Pop 2018	Christians	Chr%
50,951,000	41,650,000	81.7

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

How did Christians get there?

Christianity was introduced into the region of present-day Kenya by the Portuguese during the 16th century. The Portuguese were driven out of the coastal region of Kenya in 1698 by the forces of Oman. As a result, Christianity could not establish itself in Kenya until 1844 when the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) sent Johann Ludwig Krapf. In 1862, British Methodists came to Mombasa. White Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church came to Kenya in 1889. In 1910, Pentecostalism arrived with representatives of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The Salvation Army started work in Kenya in 1921.

The arrival of Christianity from abroad was followed by the establishment of indigenous churches in the country. The Momiya Luo Mission was established by former Anglicans in 1914. The African Church of the Holy Spirit was founded in 1927. The Kenya Foundation of the Prophets Church was also established in 1927, the National Independent Church of Africa in 1929, and the Gospel Furthering Bible Church in 1936.

What church networks exist today?

Church networks: Kenya	Christians	%
Orthodox	734,000	1.8
Catholic	11,482,000	27.6
Protestant	21,025,000	50.5
Independent	8,207,000	19.7
Unaffiliated	845,000	2.0
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-643,000	-1.5
Total	**41,650,000**	**100.0**
(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)		
Evangelical movement	14,082,000	33.8
Renewalist movement	16,053,000	38.5

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)

There are many churches and Christian groups in Kenya. According to World Christian Database, some of the largest denominations are Roman Catholic, Anglican, Africa Inland Church, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Baptist Convention of Kenya, Pentecostal Assemblies of God and Seventh-Day-Adventists.

Religious context

Religious Context: Kenya	Numbers	%
Christians	41,650,000	81.7
Muslim	4,000,000	7.9
Hindu	250,000	0.5
Buddhist	1,600	0.0
Ethnoreligionist	4,377,000	8.6
Jewish	2,600	0.0
Bahai	472,000	0.9
Atheist	2,000	0.0
Agnostic	49,200	0.1
Other	145,360	0.3

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)

Kenya is a Christian majority country. Although the percentage of Muslims in Kenya is fairly small (7.9% according to WCD), the Church on the north-eastern border with Somalia faces severe persecution from the strong Muslim presence. The cross-border attacks by al-Shabaab have forced many Christians to close their churches and abandon the region.

Notes on the current situation

In recent years, Christians in Kenya have suffered much pressure and attacks from Islamic groups. Many have been killed because of their faith. In a nutshell, Christians in Kenya face the following main challenges:

• Constant fear of violent attacks by al-Shabaab and sympathizers;

• Discrimination in Muslim majority areas, i.e. in schools, employment and in sharing community resources.

External Links - WWL 2019: Church History and Facts

• How did Christians get there?: establishment of indigenous churches http://www.dacb.org/stories/kenya/chege_samuelj.html

WWL 2019: Short & Simple Persecution Profile

Introduction

Reporting period: 1 November 2017 - 31 October 2018

With a score of 61 points, Kenya ranked 40th on WWL 2019. In WWL 2018, the country scored 62 points.

What type of persecution dominates?

Islamic oppression: Inspired by radical Islamic influences spilling over from Somalia, Muslim politicians, representing Muslim-dominated constituencies in Kenya, have an agenda to eliminate the Church from their constituencies. Al-Shabaab carries out suicide bomb attacks and other brutal acts against those they perceive to be enemies of Islam. The group is said to have ties with other militant groups such as al-Qaeda in Algeria and Boko Haram in Nigeria. The group's attacks against Kenya are also said to be a strategic move to gain popularity for their movement. The north-eastern part of the country is particularly affected.

Organized corruption and crime: Corruption is rampant in Kenya. Those operating against Christians often enjoy impunity and this, in turn, encourages further acts of persecution. In 2017, Kenya was listed as the 37th most corrupt nation in the world.

Who is driving persecution?

Persecution in Kenya has various drivers:

1) The strongest driver of persecution is the Islamic militant group called al-Shabaab. This group, even though based in Somalia, has conducted numerous attacks targeting Christians in majority Christian Kenya. The Muslim minority (well under 10% of the total population) is mainly located in the north-eastern and coastal areas of Kenya, and it is this area that has been the main focus for attacks. Many Christians in the aforementioned regions have fled the areas and relocated to other places.

2) Some of the country's tribal leaders, especially in the north-east region are at times anti-Christian. That is also where Islam and tribalism is interconnected.

3) The government's attempt to enforce secularism is also at times harsh on churches and Christians as they are required to do things that are not in line with their faith.

4) Corruption is rampant in Kenya. Co-opted officials, in particular, turn a blind eye to the activities of persecutors.

What it results in

In Kenya all Christian communities are affected by persecution. Particularly Christians with a Muslim background in the northeast and coastal regions live under constant threat of attack even from their closest relatives. In the WWL 2019 reporting period, Christians have been attacked and forced to flee their villages. It was reported that al-Shabaab has infiltrated the local population to monitor the activities of Christians in those areas. However, organized corruption and crime is also a serious problem. Co-opted officials do not take measures against those who persecute Christians, and this in turn encourages further acts of persecution.

Violence

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

Kenya	Reporting period	Christians killed	Christians attacked	Christians arrested	Churches attacked	Christian-owned houses and shops attacked
WWL 2019	01 Nov 2017 - 31 Oct 2018	20	42	1	3	2
WWL 2018	01 Nov 2016 - 31 Oct 2017	39	310	0	0	150

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

- In some parts of the north-eastern and coastal regions, Christians are often ostracized and denied access to community resources.

- On 16 February 2018, 3 Christian staff were killed at night by suspected al-Shabaab militants at a primary school 100 miles from the Somalia border in Kenya.

- On 4 May 2018, four Christians were brutally killed by al-Shabaab militants in a quarry in Mandera where they were working.

External Links - WWL 2019: Short & Simple Persecution Profile

- Examples of specific persecution in the reporting period: killed https://morningstarnews.org/2018/02/suspected-al-shabaab-militants-kill-three-christians-northeast-kenya-sources-say/

WWL 2019: Persecution Dynamics

Introduction

Reporting period: 1 November 2017 - 31 October 2018

Position on World Watch List (WWL)

With 61 points, Kenya ranks 40th in WWL 2019. Kenya's WWL 2018 score was 62 points. The persecution of Christians in Kenya remains at a very high level. The main reason for the drop in score was a lower violence score caused by a slight decrease in the number of attacks by al-Shabaab and its supporters.

Persecution engines

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

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).

Islamic oppression (Very strong):

Even though Kenya is a Christian majority country (with approximately 81.7% of the population being Christian), *Islamic oppression* is the main persecution engine. An estimated 7.9% of the Kenyan population is Muslim, according to WCD statistics, of which the majority is Sunni. The Muslim population is mainly located in the north-eastern and coastal areas of Kenya, but has also spread over other parts of the country, and has begun to respond to perceived disenfranchisement in Kenyan society. Inspired by radical Islamic influences spilling over from Somalia, Muslim politicians, representing Muslim dominated constituencies in Kenya, have an agenda to eliminate the Church from their constituencies. The north-eastern part of the country is also highly affected by *Islamic oppression*. Radical Muslims living in Kenya, together with militants crossing the border from Somalia, are severely persecuting Christians and have been responsible in recent years for the killing of hundreds of Christians solely for their faith. To emphasize the challenge facing Christians in the north-eastern and coastal areas, one country researcher reported: "The eastern or coastal counties have long been under heavy Islamic influence due to historical factors - this is where Muslims first arrived (long before the Christian missionaries in Kenya) and along the east coast of Africa in general. The counties where incidences of medium to very strong strength of this engine [Islamic oppression] can be found include Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Lamu, Kilifi, and Kwale."

Organized corruption and crime (Weak):

In Kenya, corruption is rampant, affecting both public and private life. According to Transparency International's corruption index of February 2018, Kenya ranks 143rd of 180 countries, that is 37th

on the list of the most corrupt countries. The presence of corruption in Kenya results in an inadequate punishment of perpetrators of persecution. Many institutions, including parliament, the judiciary and especially the executive arm, have been affected. This , in turn, affects the Christian communities' access to justice and protection by the police force when required. There are also local reports that suggest al-Shabaab managed to carry out the deadly attacks at Garissa University in April 2014 by paying bribes to security officials for importing weapons and ammunition. Furthermore, in the north-eastern region, there are reports about al-Shabaab and its supporters earning fortunes by paying millions of Shillings to public officials for importing sugar and other goods via the port of Kismayo. It is in this context that the persecution of Christians must be seen. Co-opted officials do not take measures against those who persecute Christians, and this, in turn, encourages further acts of persecution.

Drivers of persecution

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

Drivers of Islamic oppression: It is fair to say that the leading driver of persecution in Kenya is the Islamic militant group called al-Shabaab. The group originates from Somalia whose main aim is that of establishing an Islamic state in Somalia. Its presence in Kenya results from a retaliatory move against Kenya's armed intervention through its contribution of troops to the

AU to quell the insurrection in Somalia. The group carries out suicide bomb attacks and other brutal acts against all whom they perceive to be enemies of Islam. The group is said to have ties with militant groups in Algeria and Nigeria. Muslim family and community leaders are also drivers of persecution especially in relation to converts from Islam. Government officials and some ethnic leaders are to some extent also drivers of persecution.

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime: The presence of organized corruption in the country has also made application of the rule of law difficult, hence in the process, Christians are victims of persecution and have limited course for redress. The drivers include violent groups, criminal cartels and government officials.

Context

The analysis of the present Kenyan situation would be incomplete without mentioning the 2017 presidential elections and the role of the Kenyan Supreme Court. The Kenyan Supreme Court nullified the presidential election in August 2017, an election that was declared "fairly free and fair" by international observers including former US Secretary of State John Kerry. The Court ruled that the election was not conducted according to the standards set out by the constitution. The preparation for the elections led to a security vacuum that al-Shabaab exploited, beheading non-Muslims in areas bordering Somalia.

It should be emphasized that persecution in Kenya due to *Islamic oppression* contains elements of *ethnic cleansing*, but there are several other factors that are relevant for understanding the persecution dynamics going on in the background in Kenyan society. To begin with, Kenya has a very complex ethnic composition which is always at play in everyday politics in the country. Next, Kenya is a country with a Christian majority and a considerably smaller Muslim population. This Muslim minority has become politically active and powerful in many sectors in the country. In addition, Kenya suffers from periodic outbursts of ethnic and tribal violence. Often this has a political dimension; the violent aftermath of the elections (which were widely believed to be rigged) in 2007-2008 is a good example.

Another factor for understanding the current persecution dynamics in Kenya is the role religion plays. Until fairly recently, Kenya had no history of inter-religious conflict. Christians and Muslims appeared to co-exist in relative peace. This has completely changed in the last few years. Especially the north-eastern and coastal regions have become hot-spots of radical Islamic activity, which is a major factor causing faith-related violence. Kenya shares a long border with Somalia and is affected by its lack of sustainable peace and stability. Furthermore, the Kenyan armed forces are engaged in fighting in Somalia. Large numbers of refugees from various neighboring countries, including Somalia, are currently finding refuge in Kenya. In the context of Islamic oppression, the militant group al-Shabaab is the biggest threat driving persecution in Kenya. Areas where al-Shabaab concentrates attacks include Mombasa, Mandera, Garissa, Wajir, Lamu and Tana River. Other threats leading to the persecution of Christians are radical Muslim communities, indoctrinated through al-Shabaab's influence. These specifically target converts from Islam.

Kenya held a referendum in 2010 that approved a new constitution with a new government structure. Over the past year, the government has also stepped up implementing its program of secularism which restricts freedom for Christians. In this regard, the government is devising policies and implementing them even though some of the policies might be in conflict with Christian beliefs. Examples are new school curricula containing gender issues and other policies that require churches to either bend or break. Also important is the level of corruption in Kenya. Corruption in public institutions is rampant

and seriously weakens the protection of citizens. Last, but not least, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC, a group working for the secession of north-eastern and coastal Kenya) has been linked to terrorist groups like al-Shabaab by the Kenyan authorities. Many churches have been destroyed in the coastal region over the years, and many Christians have been forced to leave the area.

Christian communities and how they are affected

All Christian communities in the country face persecution even though the level of persecution depends upon where they live and which Christian groups they belong to. For example, in north-eastern and coastal regions the level of persecution is so intense that at times Christians pay the ultimate price just because of their faith.

Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians in Kenya are not involuntarily isolated and are hence not treated as a separate WWL category for scoring and WWL analysis.

Historical Christian communities: Churches in this category can be found in many parts of the country. The persecution they face and the intensity of the persecution depend on the regions in which they live. In areas where Islam is dominant, the persecution is from *Islamic oppression* and the intensity is very high.

Converts to Christianity: Christians with a Muslim background are mainly found in Muslim-dominated areas in the north-eastern region and along the coast (including Mombasa). In general, these converts face different persecution dynamics to those Christians from a non-Muslim background. They face intense pressure at the hands of family and friends and, if discovered by groups like al-Shabaab, they can be killed as well. Christian converts are also targeted by mobs or smaller groups from the local Islamic communities.

Non-traditional Christian communities: This category includes groups such as Baptist, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations. They can be found throughout the country. This group is the most active type of Christianity in the country and as a result, it faces severe forms of persecution.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence

WWL 2019 Persecution Pattern for Kenya
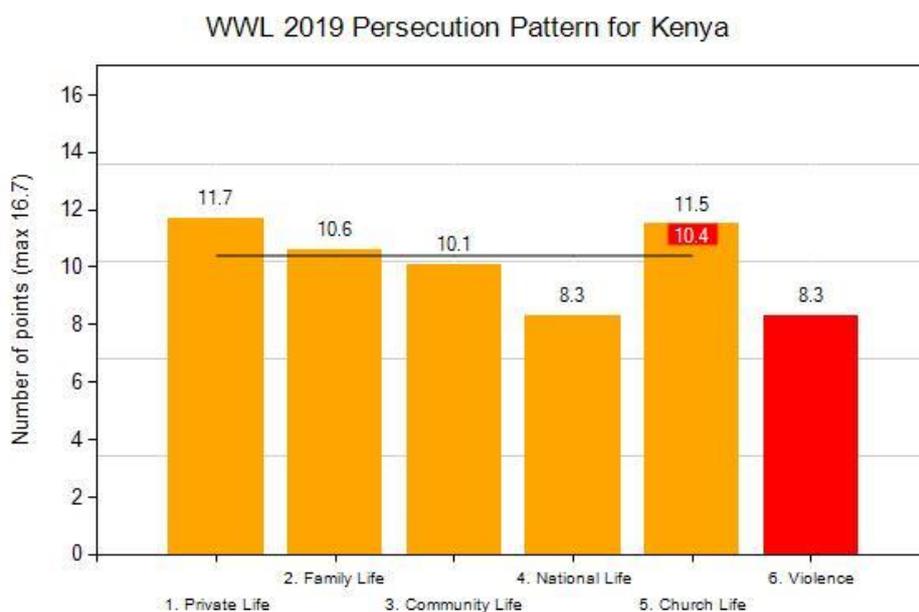
The WWL 2019 Persecution pattern for Kenya shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Kenya remains at a high level, decreasing from 10.5 in WWL 2018 to 10.4 in WWL 2019.

- Except for the *national sphere*, there is no *sphere of life* where the pressure on Christians scores less than 10 points and is highest in the *private sphere* (11.7), reflecting the very high pressure on converts in the north-eastern region. The next highest pressure is found in the *church sphere* (11.5), an indication that church life is very difficult in the northeast as a result of threats from al-Shabaab and its supporters.

- The score for violence remains very high but decreased from 9.4 in WWL 2018 to 8.3 in WWL 2018.

Private sphere:

In the context of *Islamic oppression*, Christians with a Muslim background face pressure mainly, but not exclusively, in their private life. For example, in the predominantly Muslim north-eastern and coastal regions of Kenya, converts face the risk of deadly attack if they reveal their conversion. These attacks could be orchestrated by family members or by members of the local community.

Family sphere:

This is another area of life where converts face serious problems. Being denied a place for burial, forced marriage, children of Christians being harassed – these are some of the common forms of pressure. Christian converts face the risk of a loss of inheritance rights and of being disowned by their families. Also, women with a Muslim background in particular face severe challenges when it comes to marrying and starting a family. They face the possibility of forced marriage and even rape.

Community sphere:

Christians living in the north-eastern and coastal regions have been suffering high pressure and recently there is serious concern about al-Shabaab infiltrating the local population, making it easy for al-Shabaab members to identify Christian homes. In these areas, it is very common for grazing land or drinking water to be shared in a communal way of life. However, this sharing is made particularly difficult for Christians in areas where the Muslim population is a majority. The main drivers behind this persecution are primarily direct family members or members of the extended family (for converts), but also non-Christian religious leaders and ethnic group leaders.

National sphere:

Pressure in the *national sphere of life* is common to all categories of Christianity. The drivers are government officials, political parties with a Muslim affiliation and the nexus of religious leaders and their followers (i.e. radical Islamic movements involving ordinary people). The role of *Organized corruption and crime* in this sphere of life is also visible. The steps towards decentralization which the country has taken in the past seven years are also having an impact on Christians; Muslim politicians are considering Christians unimportant for their political purposes.

Church sphere:

The pressure experienced in this sphere is tied to the impact of violence being orchestrated by Islamic militants in the region. The targeted violence has created a climate of fear among Christians. As a result, building a church or gathering for activities in a church in some places has become dangerous.

The combined influence of *Islamic oppression* and *Organized corruption and crime* has made church life more complicated than in previous years. Corruption has handicapped the authorities in their duty to protect all citizens; in most cases of violent incidents against Christians, proper investigations by the police were not conducted.

Violence:

Violence against Christians remains very high, although there were less attacks by al-Shabaab on Christians and Christians businesses compared to WWL 2018. For a summary of the statistics on violence and examples, please see the Short and Simple Persecution Profile section above.

5 Year trends

The three charts below show the situation for Christians over the last five reporting periods. Chart 1 clearly shows that the level of pressure on Christians in all *spheres of life* has been high and very high. Except for the *national sphere* of life, other spheres have consistently scored ten points or more. This is a reflection of the fact that persecution in Kenya is specific to certain areas or groups, not a national phenomenon. The *Church sphere* has also repeatedly scored 11 points or more in the last four reporting periods. In Chart 2 it can be seen that the average pressure has consistently been at above ten points and reached the max during WWL 2016 when it scored 12.2. Since then it has been decreasing slowly. Chart 3, depicting the violence scores over the last five reporting periods, shows a varied picture due to the varying number of Christians killed or other attacks perpetrated by al-Shabaab and its supporters on Christians. Violence peaked in WWL 2015 where it scored 13. Only in WWL 2016 did the score go below 8 points (7.2).

WWL 2015 - WWL 2019 Persecution Profile for Kenya (Spheres of life)
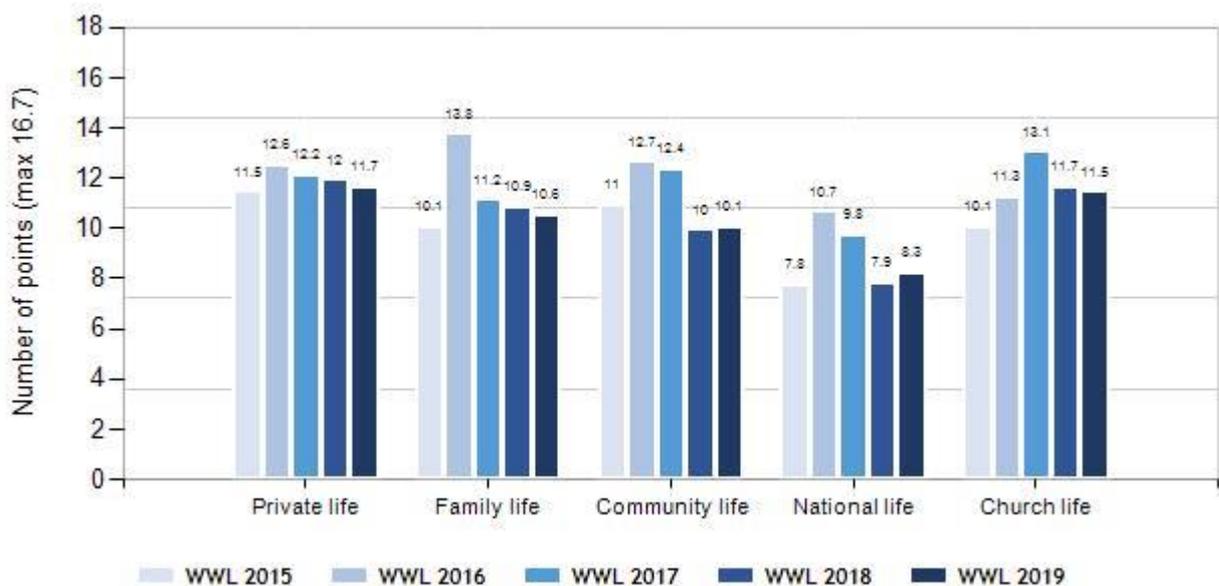
WWL 2015 - WWL 2019 Persecution Pattern history: Kenya	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2019	10.4
2018	10.5
2017	11.7
2016	12.2
2015	10.1

WWL 2015 - WWL 2019 Persecution Profile for Kenya (Violence)
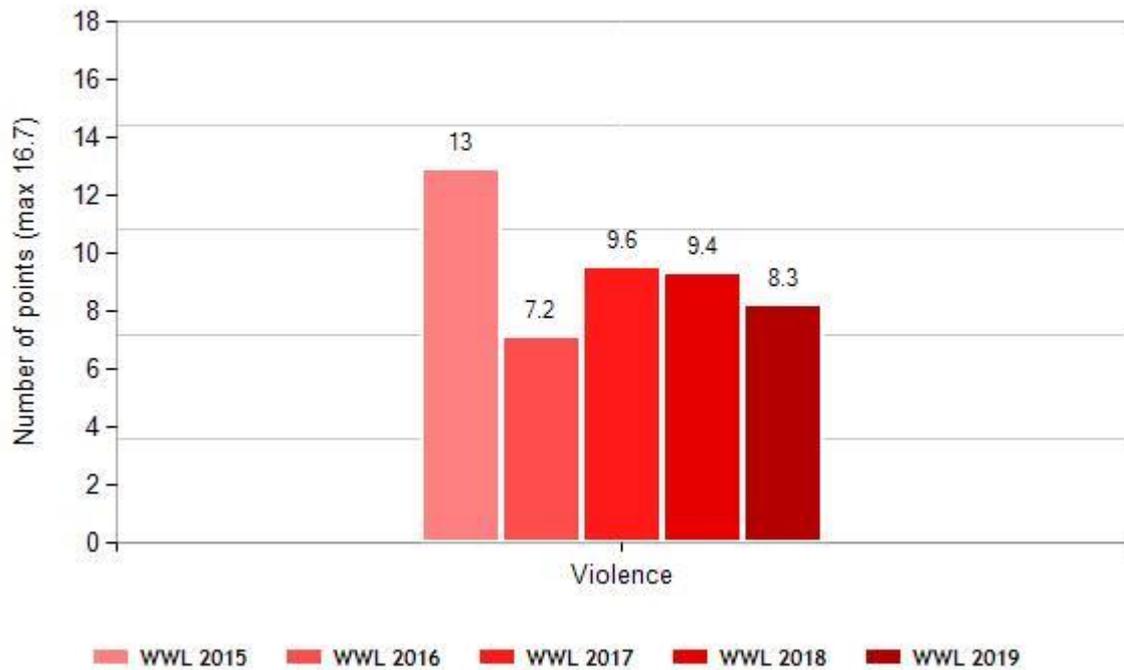
Gender specific persecution

Female: According to a country researcher: "Christian girls and ladies face more instances of verbal abuse and social rejection in [Muslim-dominated] regions. They are also forced to be very careful so as not to be waylaid and raped by Muslims. The female teachers in Muslim-dominated areas complained of rampant sexual harassment from their male Muslim students and other Muslim men in the society. However, they also face the risk of death if found by the al-Shabaab." Another researcher noted that reports had emerged of women being "lured or abducted into al-Shabaab camps inside the Boni forest or in Somalia, and held there as sex slaves, forced to become ' wives' of the militia or just 'breeders' of the next generation of fighters."

Male: Boys and men in the wider north-eastern and Lamu areas are at greatest risk since the al-Shabaab militia specifically target them for beheading/killing. This was seen in the past during attacks on Christians in villages where only men were killed.

Persecution of other religious minorities

Concerning other religious groups in the country, there are no reports that suggest their persecution. But, some analysts say that al-Shabaab, even though its primary target is Christians, will target all groups except Sunni Muslims. According to the US State Department IRF report for 2017: "Muslim

minority groups, particularly those of Somali descent, reportedly continued to be harassed by non-Muslims. … According to religious leaders, some Muslim youths responded to alleged abuses by non-Muslim members of the police who came from other regions by vandalizing properties of local Christians."

Future outlook

The political outlook: Kenyan politics is full of drama, unpredictability and betrayals. The winners are often those who manage to bring the larger ethnic groups under one umbrella. In the 2007/8 post-election, William Ruto who is from the Kalenjin was on the side of Raila Odinga who is from the Luo. However, during the 2013 and afterward, Ruto switched sides and became vice-president for Uhuru Kenyatta who is from Kukuyu. Now there are reports that Ruto is being sidelined by the president. This was strengthened by the agreement signed and the press conference held by Kenyatta and Odinga in 2018. If this happens, the country will go through another round of contentious political rhetoric in the coming two years. However, at the moment, the country seems stable despite its inability to control its border with Somalia though which al-Shabaab fighters come in and attack Christians.

The outlook for Christians: In the WWL 2019 reporting period, al-Shabaab remained active. There is little hope that the Kenyan government can keep Kenyan Christians safe. This is mainly due to the fact that there is institutionalized corruption in the country and that the situation in Somalia is not improving. Investigations into violence targeting Christians have not been properly investigated by the police. However, Christians are likely to remain politically and economically dominant due to the overwhelming Christian majority in the population.

Conclusion:

- The level of persecution in Kenya is likely to continue - unless al-Shabaab were to be defeated.Al-Shabaab is likely to continue recruiting young Kenyan Muslims (unless a comprehensive policy is developed to contain it).

- The fact that some cases of corruption at high levels has been exposed and that there is a readiness among leaders to be transparent shows an improvement in corruption levels to a small extent. This improvement might encourage foreign organizations to bring in aid to a large number of communities affected by poverty (since corruption has also affected the level of trust amongst donors).

- If political friction erupts in the country, al-Shabaab might take such an opportunity to launch attacks.

External Links - WWL 2019: Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines: corruption index
  https://www.transparency.org/country/KEN

- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRF report for 2017
  https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/280996.pdf

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