



Focus on Religious Freedom

***"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted."
2 Timothy 3:12***

Globally, Religious Freedom is Under Siege

According to a 2022 Pew Research Center report, over 75% of the world's population live in countries with high or very high governmental and/or societal restrictions on religious freedom. Throughout the Middle East, Church leaders - from Jerusalem to Iraq - are concerned that the Christian population is emigrating at alarming rates. The very birthplace of Christianity now faces the serious threat of losing its heritage because Christians are fleeing systematic violence in their homeland. ⁽¹⁾

In Southeast Asia and Africa, the countries of Myanmar and Nigeria are now seeing the most brutal persecution. "Myanmar authorities brutalized us," said a 30-year-old Muslim refugee. "They burned down our houses, raped our mothers and sisters, burned our children. We took shelter in Bangladesh to escape that brutality." ⁽²⁾ These killings by the Myanmar military led to over 700,00 Rohingya Muslims into overcrowded, disease-ridden camps.

Christians are the particular target of persecution in Nigeria. More Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than in the rest of the world combined. ⁽³⁾ "Nigeria is currently one of the scariest places to be a Christian," says an Open Door's analyst. "The country has witnessed an explosion of violence in recent months. Attacks are happening almost on a daily basis.... (This) is what is happening across West Africa - the agenda, and the process and model of persecution are being implemented elsewhere with impunity." ⁽⁴⁾

"The United Nations estimates that over 82 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, the highest number on record. Many are displaced due to conflicts, real or manufactured, over religion..." ⁽⁵⁾

***"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and
utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account." Matthew 5:11***

(uscbb.org, 2022(1)(5); humanrightswatch.org, 8/24/22(2); opendoorsuk.org, 5/10/22(3)(4); bbc.com, 5/24/22; anglican.ink, 9/16/22)