

World
Watch
Research

Mozambique: Full Country Dossier

January 2022



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

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Woman in Mozambique (c) IMB

Introduction

World Watch List 2022

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

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

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Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the “Keys to Understanding” chapter under the heading “Links for general background information”. Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2022 reporting period was 01 October 2020 - 30 September 2021.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

Effect on data-gathering during COVID-19 pandemic

In the WWL 2022 reporting period, travel restrictions and other measures introduced by the governments of various countries to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic did cause delays and create the need for restructuring grass-roots research in some cases. Through the agile cooperation of In-country networks, Open Doors country researchers, External experts, WWR analysts and an increased use of technological options, Open Doors is confident that – as in the previous reporting period – WWL 2022 scoring, analysis and documentation has maintained required levels of quality and reliability.

External Links - Introduction

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

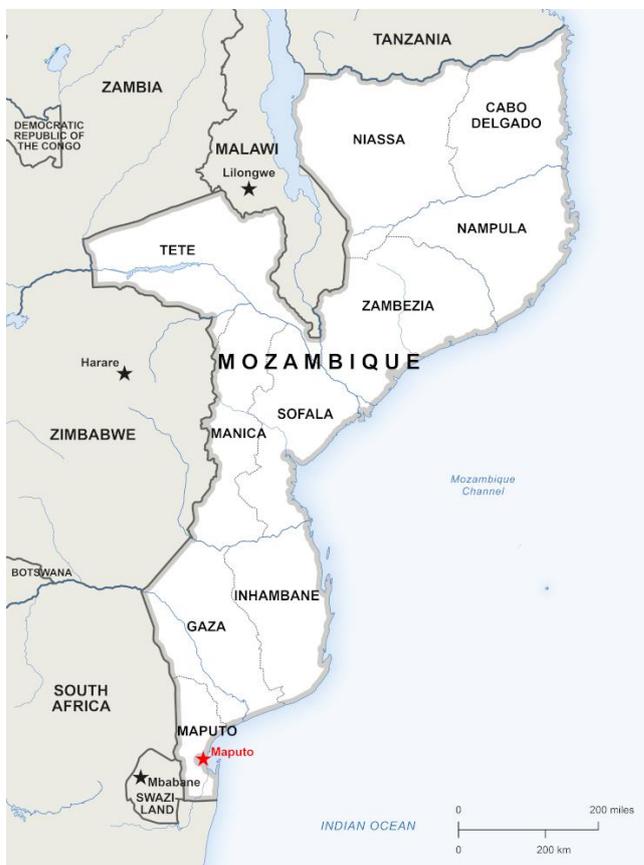
WWL 2022 Situation in brief / Mozambique

Brief country details

Mozambique: Population (UN estimate for 2021)	Christians	Chr%
33,230,000	18,012,000	54.2

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

Map of country



Mozambique: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	65	41
WWL 2021	63	45
WWL 2020	43	66
WWL 2019	43	65
WWL 2018	-	-

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

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

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

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

Brief description of the persecution situation

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

Summary of international obligations and rights violations

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

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

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

- In the North, Christians are killed for their faith (ICCPR Art. 6)

- Christian women are raped and abducted (ICCPR Art. 7)
- Christian women are forcibly married (ICCPR Art. 23 and CEDAW Art. 16)
- Converts to Christianity suffer from discrimination and violence in the north (ICCPR Arts. 18 and 26).

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- 24 March 2021: About 200 *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ) fighters attacked the northern Mozambican town of Palma. Over a period of four days, the group killed dozens of local people and destroyed much of the town's infrastructure, including banks, a police station and food aid warehouses. The Islamic State group (IS) later stated that the fighters had killed more than 55 "members of the Mozambican army and the Christians, including nationals of Crusader state" ([Combatting Terrorism Center, April/May 2021](#)).
- Islamic militants have often targeted Christians, noting that their goal is to set up a caliphate similar to IS in Iraq and Syria. In some cases, there have been reports that militants go door to door asking: 'Are you a Christian? Or are you a Muslim?' If you are a Christian, you are killed. There are also reports of Muslims being killed because they could not recite the Quran in Arabic.
- Islamic militants in Mozambique kidnap girls and force them to become child brides; the girls are raped and subjected to all manner of sexual abuse. The militants put the girls under considerable pressure to convert to Islam and teach them about how to become "good Islamic mothers"

Specific examples of positive developments

The Southern Africa Development Community and Rwanda have sent troops to help Mozambique's army fight the jihadists. As a result, the jihadists have been forced to withdraw from some of the towns and locations they occupied earlier.

External Links - Situation in brief

- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Combatting Terrorism Center, April/May 2021 - <https://ctc.usma.edu/april-may-2021/>

WWL 2022: Keys to understanding / Mozambique

Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International country report	AI 2021	https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/mozambique/	17 August 2021
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13890416	17 August 2021
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2020	BTI 2020	https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard-MOZ.html	17 August 2021
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mozambique/	17 August 2021
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2020	EIU 2020	https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf	17 August 2021
FFP's Fragile States Index 2021	FSI 2021	https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/	17 August 2021
Freedom House's 2021 Democracy index (Mozambique is not included)	Freedom House/Democracy 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores	
Freedom House's 2021 Global Freedom index	Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/country/mozambique/freedom-world/2021	17 August 2021
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2020 report (Mozambique is not included)	Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores	
Garda World country report	Garda World	https://www.garda.com/crisis24/country-reports/mozambique	17 August 2021
Human Rights Watch World Report 2021	HRW 2021	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/mozambique	17 August 2021
Internet World Stats 2021	IWS 2021	https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#mz	17 August 2021
RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index	World Press Freedom 2020	https://rsf.org/en/mozambique	17 August 2021
Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index	CPI 2020	https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/moz	17 August 2021
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators	HDI	http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MOZ	17 August 2021
US State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom country reports	IRFR 2020	https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/mozambique/	17 August 2021
USCIRF 2021 country reports (Mozambique is not included)	USCIRF 2021	https://www.uscifr.gov/countries	
World Bank country report	World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mozambique	17 August 2021

Recent history

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

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

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

party elections, problems such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and political violence persist (World Politics Review, 21 January 2016).

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

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

Political and legal landscape

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

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

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

ASWJ, designated by the USA as a [Global Terrorist Organization](#) (US State Department, 10 March 2021), has created enormous socio-economic challenges to the country. Among others, the regional bloc Southern African Development Community (SADC) [decided](#) to send troops to assist in combatting the group (Africa News, 23 June 2021).

Women remain particularly vulnerable within Mozambique’s political and legal system. The [2004 Family Law \(Article 7\)](#) is the overarching legal framework for marriage and provides for equal rights for both women and men to enter marriage and file for divorce. Many women in informal or de facto unions however, have uncertain legal rights. The practice of ‘widow purification’ (*pita-kufa*) continues, whereby widows are forced to have sex with a relative of her deceased husband’s family ([BMC International Health and Human Rights, 18\(1\) September 2018](#)), as does the practice of land and property grabbing from widows ([OECD, 2019](#)). The minimum legal age for marriage is set at 18, although marriages can occur from the age of 16 with the consent of the court, parent or guardian (Family Law, 2004, Art. 19). Mozambique has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world, with 48% of girls marrying by the age of 18 ([Girls Not Brides, 2020](#)). The Law on Domestic Violence Perpetrated Against Women Act, introduced in 2009, was an important step in providing protection for victims, particularly as it specifically addressed marital rape. Effectively implementing legislation in practice however, remains an ongoing issue ([Jetha et al, BMC Public Health 21\(1\), April 2021](#)).

Religious landscape

Mozambique: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	18,012,000	54.2
Muslim	5,801,000	17.5
Hindu	48,000	0.1
Buddhist	2,800	0.0
Ethno-religionist	9,217,000	27.7
Jewish	200	0.0
Bahai	3,800	0.0
Atheist	23,700	0.1
Agnostic	115,000	0.3
Other	5,900	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

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

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

What the US State Department wrote in its [2010 International Religious Freedom Report](#) is still valid today: "Muslim journalists reported that the distinction between Sunni and Shi'a was not particularly important for many local Muslims, and Muslims were much more likely to identify

themselves by the local religious leader they follow than as Sunni or Shi'a. There were significant differences between the practices of Muslims of African origin and those of South Asian background. In addition African Muslim clerics have increasingly sought training in Egypt, Kuwait, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia, returning with a more fundamental approach than the local traditional, Sufi-inspired Swahili Islam particularly common in the north."

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

Reports show that the government of Mozambique is [concerned about](#) the emergence of new smaller churches, some of which have split off from the bigger churches, and is planning to put stricter regulations in place (Club of Mozambique, 30 May 2019).

Economic landscape

According to [World Bank's 2021 Macro Poverty Outlook](#) for Sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Economic growth:** In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic substantially disrupted economic activity contracting real GDP to 1.3% from 2.3% growth in 2019. Inflation: In 2020, inflation witnessed an upward adjustment from 2.8% in 2019 to 3.1%. This was still below the government's projection of 4%. However, average food inflation, which affects the poor most, reached almost 9%.

"Growth is projected at 1.7% in 2021, down from the pre-COVID estimate of 5%, given the slow rollout of the vaccine, rising virus cases and deaths, and tighter containment measures."

"The service sector is set to recover, but slowly, considering the still limited mobility. Agriculture will also contribute to growth recovery, as ongoing investments in irrigation, improved seeds, and distribution system yield returns. However, unfavorable weather conditions, pose considerable risks."

"In the medium term, growth is anticipated to gradually pick up, reaching 6% by 2023, as the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) sector develops."

- **Poverty:** Given the prevalence of high population growth in Mozambique, the poverty rate is estimated to have increased from 61.9% in 2019 to 63.3% in 2020, owing to loss of income and employment, pushing an estimated 1 million people into poverty. "Poverty rate is expected to average 62.2% between 2020 and 2023."
- **Debt:** Mozambique remains in debt distress with external and public debt stocks totaling 122% of GDP in 2020 from 108% of GDP in 2019, mainly due to rising financing needs and currency depreciation.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** The current account deficit, excluding one-off capital gains, reached 27.3% of GDP in 2020, compared to 25.5% in 2019, mainly financed by FDI, private debt and donor support. It is projected to reach around 60% in the medium-term as LNG

investments advance.

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

- At independence in 1975, Mozambique was one of the world's poorest countries. Socialist policies, economic mismanagement and a brutal civil war from 1977 to 1992 further impoverished the country. In 1987, the government embarked on a series of macro-economic reforms designed to stabilize the economy. In spite of improvements, about half the population remains below the poverty line and subsistence agriculture continues to employ the vast majority of the country's workforce.
- Mozambique's once substantial foreign debt was reduced through various initiatives. However, in 2016 information surfaced revealing that the Mozambican government was holding over \$2 billion in government-backed loans secured between 2012-14 by state-owned defense and security companies without parliamentary approval or national budget inclusion. This prompted the IMF and international donors to halt direct budget support to the government. An international audit was performed on Mozambique's debt in 2016-17.
- Mozambique's development and economic strength are constrained by social considerations including very low wealth levels and limited access to quality basic services such as education, health care, access to roads, and electricity, and pervasive poverty, as is the case in a number of frontier market countries.

Women are typically more economically vulnerable in Mozambique. Whilst Articles 66 and 213 of the Civil Code allow for equal inheritance rights for both genders, customary practices commonly deny women and girls their due inheritance ([OECD, 2019](#)). The female labor force participation rate is high, with 77.3% of women in the workplace, compared to 79% of men (UNDP's HDI 2020). However, women have more limited access to formal financial inclusion instruments than men and are more likely to be working in the informal sector ([LSE, March 2018](#)).

Social and cultural landscape

According to the UNDP's HDI 2020 report and CIA Factbook:

- **Main ethnic groups:** 99% of Mozambicans are descended from indigenous tribes (Makhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, Sena, Chokwe, Manyika, and Sau), Mestizo 0.8%, other 0.2% (includes European, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese) (2017 est.)
- **Main languages:** Makhuwa 26.1%, Portuguese (official) 16.6%, Tsonga 8.6%, Nyanja 8.1%, Sena 7.1%, Lomwe 7.1%, Chuwabo 4.7%, Ndau 3.8%, Tswa 3.8%, other Mozambican languages 11.8%, other 0.5%, unspecified 1.8% (2017 est.). English is also spoken in major cities such as Maputo and Beira.
- **Median age:** 17 years
- **Urban population:** 37.6% (2021)
- **Expected years of schooling:** 10 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (15 years and older):** 60.7%
- **Employment to population ratio (15 years and older):** 75.6%
- **Unemployment, total (% of labor force):** 3.2%

- **Unemployment. youth (15-24 years of age):** 6.9%

According to UNHCR's 29 May – 11 June 2021 update: ([Reliefweb, 20 June 2021](#))

- **Refugees/IDPs:** As of April 2021, 732,000 persons were displaced in the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala and Zambezia due to continuous attacks by armed groups in the north-eastern Mozambique and Cyclone Eloise which struck in January 2021. As of June 2021, 70,000 people from Palma were forcibly displaced in the aftermath of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) attacks in March. Between January and June 2021, over 9,600 Mozambican asylum seekers were forcibly returned from Tanzania. More than 70% of the displaced are women and children.

According to the UN Global Human Development Indicators (HDI 2020):

- **Human Development Index:** Mozambique ranked 181st out of 189 countries with a value of 0.456
- **Average life expectancy at birth:** 60.9 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.912
- **Gender inequality index (GII):** 0.523. Malaysia ranks 127th out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index

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

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

As noted in a [2019 CEDAW report](#), discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices persist in Mozambique, including polygamy, child marriage, female genital mutilation and accusations of witchcraft against women. The report further highlights the widespread impunity for such practices and the lack of convictions in cases of child marriage. Stark regional differences in the rates of child marriage across Mozambique suggest that sociocultural factors play a significant role; rates are highest in Northern and Central regions ([OECD, 2019](#)).

Within the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the rate of child marriages has reportedly increased, driven partly by the closure of schools ([UNICEF, Child marriage in COVID-19 contexts, 2021, p.1](#)). Lockdowns also served to exacerbate gender-based violence and domestic violence ([Club of Mozambique, 2 September 2020](#)). To try and combat child marriage, traditional leaders – widely understood to be the guardians of social practices and norms – have been invited to work alongside government and social organizations through a joint forum ([Club of Mozambique, 29 March 2021](#)).

Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2021):

- **Internet usage:** 20.3% of the population - survey date 31 December 2020
- **Facebook usage:** 8.6% of the population – survey date 31 December 2020

According to World Bank:

- **Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 hundred people):** 48.7
The [GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report \(2020\)](#) shows that Mozambique has a gender gap of 17% in relation to mobile phone ownership, and a gender gap of 39% in relation to mobile Internet users. Mozambique was (along with six other Sub-Saharan African countries) in the ten countries that reported the largest gains in women’s cell phone use on [Georgetown’s Women, Peace and Security Index \(2019/20, p.35\)](#).

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

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

According to the CIA Factbook:

- "The mobile segment has shown strong growth given competition; poor fixed-line infrastructure means most Internet access is through mobile accounts; DSL, cable broadband, WiMAX (broadband over long distances), 3G and some fiber broadband available".
- "Due to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, overall progress towards improvements in all facets of the telecom industry – mobile, fixed-line, broadband, submarine cable and satellite – has moderated".

Security situation

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

In the period 1 January - 25 April 2020, there were [101 violent incidents](#) in Cabo Delgado Province, which is 300% more than in the same period in 2019, and 285 deaths (Evangelical Focus, 8 June 2020). A selection of 2020/2021 attacks by jihadists are listed below:

- [29 January 2020](#): Militants torched a teacher training college run by a local charity in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. Most residents fled before the group reached the village after hearing gunfire nearby (US News, 30 January 2020).
- [7 February 2020](#): 7 people were beheaded in the first week of February by Islamic militants. They left homes, schools and clinics vandalized (AP News, 7 February 2020).
- [23 March 2020](#): Islamic militants briefly occupied the center of Mocímboa da Praia, a district headquarters, burning government facilities, including barracks, and brandishing banners of IS-affiliation (The Guardian, 22 April 2020).
- [24 March 2020](#): The town of Quissanga was raided and the district police headquarters severely damaged. Those attackers also carried an IS flag. Twenty to 30 members of Mozambique's security forces were killed in the attacks on 23 and 24 March (The Guardian, 22 April 2020).
- [6 April 2020](#): An attack on Meangalewa and Muidumbe villages by Islamic militants left multiple people abducted and a church burned (International Christian Concern - ICC, 11 April 2020).
- [7 April 2020](#): 52 people were massacred in an attack by al-Shabaab Mozambique in Xitaxi located in Muidumbe district after locals refused to be recruited to its ranks (The Guardian, 22 April 2020).
- [9 April 2020](#): Militants attacked Muambula village (Muidumbe district) on the mainland killing 5 people and causing damage to one of the oldest churches in the region as well as destroying homes of church missionaries before vandalizing a secondary school (Club of Mozambique, 13 April 2020).
- [19 May 2020](#): Islamic insurgents attacked a monastery where 4 monks lived located in Cabo Delgado district in northern Mozambique. The insurgents also destroyed a hospital that the monks were building in the nearby village of Auasse (ICC, 20 May 2020).
- [3-11 June 2020](#): "Insurgents in Cabo Delgado beheaded 15 heads of families in one week in the districts of Macomia and Meluco, again sowing panic among the population after the abduction of 10 girls in the district of Mocímboa da Praia." (Club of Mozambique, 15 June 2020)
- [27 June 2020](#): An attack by the Islamic State's Central Africa Province on the town of Mocimboa da Praia left at least 40 civilians killed. The attackers also burned down a Catholic church in the town.
- [24 March 2021](#): Armed groups attacked northern Mozambique close to gas projects worth some \$60 billion. The Islamic State group (IS) [claimed responsibility](#) through its Amaq News Agency saying it had taken control of the area and that 55 people had died in the fighting.
- [5 May 2021](#): Islamic militants in the north of Mozambique beheaded five people and kidnapped an unknown number of others in an attack on the village of Pangane. The nearby area of Chai was also targeted where four people were kidnapped.

According to [International Crisis Group's May 2021 update](#):

- "In far north Cabo Delgado Province, insurgents targeted internally displaced persons fleeing violence by boat, reportedly killing at least seven and kidnapping at least 40 off the coast of Macomia district on 3 May. In Nangade district, local militiamen on 7 May

clashed with insurgents in and around Ngalonga village, killing at least five, and on 22 May killed five more insurgents in Chacamba village. In Palma district, insurgents on 10 May killed three civilians and took others hostage in Olumbe village; armed forces 22 – 23 May reportedly thwarted insurgents' attempt to capture Olumbe. Government forces 21 May clashed with insurgents in and around strategic town of Diaca, Mocimboa da Praia district, allegedly driving them out of locality; 22 – 23 May reportedly took control of Muidumbe district capital Namacande, which had been under insurgents' control since late 2020. NGO Amnesty International 13 May said rescue operation conducted by South African private military company Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) during siege in Palma town in March was marred by racial discrimination, with White contractors evacuated ahead of black locals; DAG same day denied allegations."

- "Southern Africa regional bloc SADC 27 May held extraordinary double troika summit to discuss deployment of regional forces in Cabo Delgado but deferred decision to deploy force to next meeting scheduled for 20 June. Meanwhile, André Matsangaíssa Júnior, former senior member of Renamo Military Junta (JMR), armed dissident faction of opposition Renamo party, 3 May said JMR leader Mariano Nhongo would soon surrender; three JMR members mid-May defected in Manica province, claimed JMR forces in stronghold of Gorongosa, Sofala province, much reduced with only seven people left in their ranks. Nyusi 16 May said disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former armed opposition movement Renamo forces would not be concluded by August as expected due to lack of funds".

According to a report by World Vision, sexual violence against children is on the rise in Mozambique, with 99% of rape cases affecting girls ([Club of Mozambique, 25 November 2020](#)). This rise has been linked to increasing unemployment of parents and guardians, displacement, and attacks by militias. As reported by Amnesty international, extremists abduct both boys and girls, to become soldiers and wives respectively, or for the purpose of sexual assault ([Amnesty International News, 2 March 2021](#); Human Rights Watch - HRW 2021). Gender-based violence has also increased within Mozambique's fragile context; women and girls are broadly understood to be the demographic most disproportionately affected by conflict ([Georgetown, 2019/20, p.52](#); [Africa Renewal, 24 February 2021](#)). In 2019, reports indicated that community leaders of displaced populations coerced women into exchanging sex for aid ([HRW, 2019](#)).

Trends analysis

1) FRELIMO remains firmly in power

Research over the last years has shown that Mozambique has been struggling i) with corruption and drug cartels; ii) to keep peace with the opposition RENAMO; iii) to uphold its commitment to international human rights. In the country's general election that was held in October 2019, FRELIMO won a landslide victory, including the presidency, 71% of parliamentary seats and ten governorships. There have now been six successive elections with the participation of opposition parties and - despite certain limitations - this shows that the country is now moving away from its history of civil war and the leaders are taking the voting public seriously. This is a positive

sign, although there is significant room for improvement.

2) The Islamic insurgency is growing

The level of fear among Christians is rising due to the growing influence of the Islamist group *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ), especially in the north of the country. Under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the US government has designated the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The US embassy has sent Special Forces trainers to bolster the efforts of Mozambique's army and leaders of the regional bloc, Southern African Development Community (SADC), are also working to help restore stability in the area. Nevertheless, there is danger that the jihadists will be able to spread their influence to other parts of the country, resulting in more insecurity, especially for Christians as the spread of attacks in provinces outside Cabo Delgado have already been reported.

External Links - Keys to understanding

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- Economic landscape: Moody's Analytics - <https://www.economy.com/mozambique/>
- Economic landscape: OECD, 2019 - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/MZ.pdf>

- Economic landscape: LSE, March 2018 - <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2018/03/12/womens-financial-inclusion-5-reasons-why-it-matters-for-mozambique/>
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WWL 2022: Church information / Mozambique

Christian origins

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

Church spectrum today

Mozambique: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	5,000	0.0
Catholic	7,511,000	41.7
Protestant	4,823,000	26.8
Independent	4,669,000	25.9
Unaffiliated	1,238,000	6.9
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-234,000	-1.3
Total	18,012,000	100.0
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	4,260,000	23.7
Renewalist movement	6,155,000	34.2

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

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

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

External Links - Church information

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

WWL 2022: Persecution Dynamics / Mozambique

Reporting period

1 October 2020 - 30 September 2021

Position on the World Watch List

Mozambique: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	65	41
WWL 2021	63	45
WWL 2020	43	66
WWL 2019	43	65
WWL 2018	-	-

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

The increase in two points is due to the pressure that has been mounting on Christians, particularly in the northern part of the country where jihadists operate. In WWL 2022, Islamic militants have been able to control many towns and cities, although they were eventually forced back by the Rwandan and forces from the Southern African states. Mozambique rose 20 points in score in WWL 2021 and entered the WWL Top 50. Radical Islamic attacks have claimed the lives of many Christians. The IS-affiliated Islamist group, *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ), wants to establish an Islamic caliphate in Mozambique and has committed numerous atrocities. It has burned down churches and schools and tens of thousands of people have fled from the northern part of the country. A persecution phenomenon that was limited to a smaller part of the country expanded in the WWL 2022 reporting period. Furthermore, the presence of drug cartels in some areas is making the lives of Christians difficult - especially for church youth workers.

Persecution engines

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

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

Islamic oppression (Very strong)

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

Clan oppression (Medium)

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

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

The Constitution declares the nation to be secular and also protects the right to practice or not practice religion. Political parties are prohibited from using names containing expressions that are directly related to any religious denominations or churches, and from using emblems that may be confused with national or religious symbols. Moreover, the Constitution bans all religious influence in public educational institutions. The state bureaucratic system and institutions that have been in place for decades also impose cumbersome registration requirements for religious groups.

Organized corruption and crime (Medium)

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

Drivers of persecution

Mozambique:									
Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	VERY STRONG			MEDIUM	WEAK			MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Government officials				-				Medium	
Ethnic group leaders				Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Medium								
Religious leaders of other churches					Weak				
Violent religious groups	Very strong								
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium			Weak	Weak				
One's own (extended) family	Medium			Weak	Weak				
Organized crime cartels or networks	Medium								Medium

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

Drivers of Islamic oppression

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

- **Ordinary citizens (Medium):** All Christian groups in Muslim majority areas can face persecution from ordinary citizens and mobs. This is particularly true in the northern part of the country.

Drivers of clan oppression

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

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

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

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

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

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

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

Christian communities and how they are affected

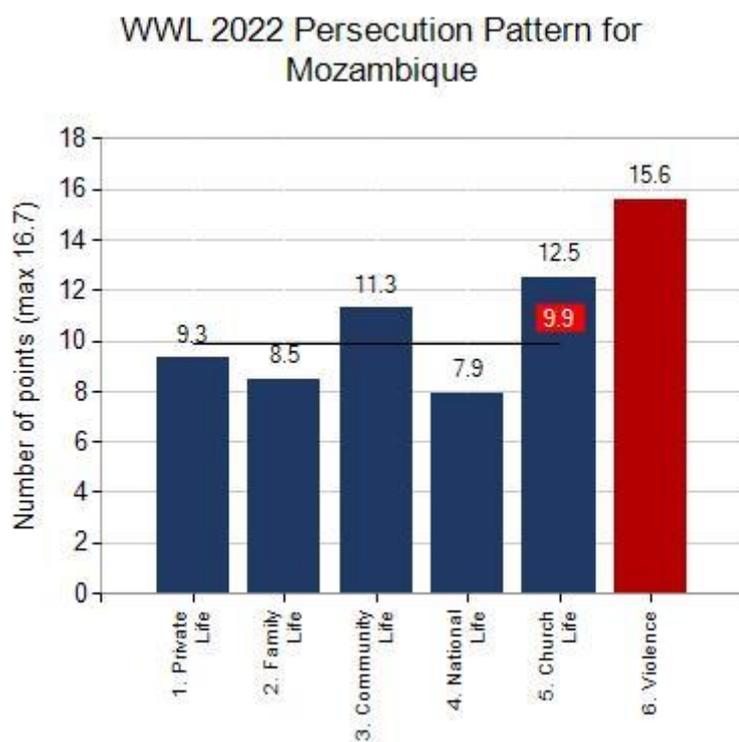
Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians are not isolated from other Christian communities in Mozambique and are thus are not treated as a separate category in WWL analysis.

Historical Christian communities: This category includes Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches. They are frequently targeted by ASWJ militants.

Converts: This category includes converts from Islam or traditional African religions to Christianity. Persecution is particularly severe if the convert is from a Muslim background living in the Muslim-dominated northern part of the country; such converts are likely to be targets for attack by radical Muslims.

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

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2022 Persecution pattern for Mozambique shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Mozambique rose from 9.4 points in WWL 2021 to 9.9 points.
- The level of pressure in the *Church sphere* is highest with 12.5 points followed by the *Community sphere* with 11.3 points. This is an indication that church and community life in the northern part of the country is being highly affected by the jihadist movement.
- Due to the jihadist attacks, the score for violence is at the extreme level of 15.6 points. This is a decrease from 16.1 points in WWL 2021, which was the result of there being no arrests recorded in the WWL 2022 reporting period.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2022 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

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

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

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

Christians symbols have become a sign that attracts danger. In the northern part of the country, Christians need to be wary of advertising their faith through displaying crosses etc. as these can provoke attack. In the WWL 2022 reporting period, jihadists have been going house-to-house in villages and burning schools, homes and churches.

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

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

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

Security and safety of civilians especially that of Christians is not guaranteed in the areas controlled by the jihadist groups. These areas have been expanding as jihadists are moving southwards. There have been brutal killings and there is a high risk involved in Christians meeting up.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)

Celebrating a Christian wedding requires some minimum security and safety, which is currently lacking in certain areas of Mozambique. For Christians in the northern part of the country, celebrating a Christian wedding could provoke an attack from Islamist groups.

Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (3.25 points)

Culturally, in many African countries baptism is a major event and hence many friends and families join together. In the context of *Christian denominational protectionism* and *Islamic oppression*, this is problematic for Christians. This is the case both in Muslim dominated areas (affecting all Christian groups) and non-Catholics in other areas. Any baptism has to be carried out without drawing outsiders' attention.

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

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

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

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

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

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

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

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

Abduction is one of the characteristics of jihadist movements in Africa. They abduct and force young men into their fighting units and young girls into sexual slavery. Christian women and girls are under threat of abduction by Islamist insurgents in the north of Mozambique. There have been a number of instances where girls have been abducted while the insurgents raid villages.

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

The threat to Christians is increasing in the Cabo Delgado Province. Sources in the country report that Christians there have faced harassment for not meeting Islamic requirements as perceived by the Islamist insurgents. Violence by the Islamist insurgents has also taken on a new face with churches and Christians being directly targeted for attack; Christians have been singled out and forced to renounce their faith. Such acts have forced many people to flee from their homes in various villages in the province of Cabo Delgado. In addition, those who speak against injustice and drug dealers face harassment and hostility.

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

Those who participate in organized crime, monitor Christians who speak against the use of drugs and participation in the drug networks. Government cadres also target churches for surveillance where the leaders are known to speak out against injustice and maladministration. This particularly affects Christians in areas where jihadists operate or are present through their network of cells.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

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

There has not been a general tendency of hindering political parties in their functioning because of Christian convictions. However, where religious leaders or prominent Christians have been vocal against the government they face obstruction. Civil society organizations can only work in areas where the government allows them to operate, and they often face close scrutiny for no justifiable reasons.

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

Mozambique is one of the countries where travelling has a huge risk due to the presence of jihadists. This security threat is above all in the north of the country, where jihadists have carried out many abductions. This threat is expanding to other parts of the country. Christians and Christian organizations are particularly vulnerable, as jihadists are known to target them frequently.

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

Freedom of expression and opinion is not cherished by the government of Mozambique. The government will hinder unwelcome church views on public issues. A country expert noted: "The church played a significant role in the democratization process in the post-colonial era in Mozambique and continues to play a key role in brokering peace deals in the country where it is so needed. However, it is now apparent that the government does not welcome the interference of the church when it comes to voicing out concerns over human rights violations." The government is also using the country's dire security situation to silence freedom of expression and opinion.

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

This goes hand in hand with the expanding influence of Islamic militants in the country. Churches and church symbols have been vandalized and destroyed. This is becoming a challenge for many Christians in the northern part of the country.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.50 points)

Church monitoring and hinderance has many elements. In some circumstances, churches are left without security so that they cannot operate at all; in some circumstances, the church is labeled as 'antigovernment' and government security agents will be present in the congregation as a result. In general, there are two main aspects: First, Christian preaching is often monitored by the authorities for signs of any criticism of the government; secondly, jihadists monitor all

church activity in the northern part of the country.

Block 5.4: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities inside their place of worship. (3.50 points)

In the past three years, jihadist groups have coordinated attacks against the church and other infrastructure in certain areas, making it too risky for Christians to meet in their churches.

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

The government has been deliberately slow in issuing licenses and, in 2020 and 2021, it drafted a new law to regulate religious affairs. It appears to be similar to what is being practiced in Rwanda – the government want officially trained church leaders and want to avoid a proliferation of smaller church groups.

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

Outside gatherings require both government permission and security. In general, the government makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the church to gather outside. In the northern part of the country, it is completely out of the question as it is a dangerous act to do. A country expert noted: "The organization of church activities outside of church buildings has been hindered in the Cabo Delgado Province due to the fear looming in the area that Christians are likely to be subject to attack."

Violence

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

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

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

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

- *Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).*

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

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

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

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

Mozambique: Violence Block question		WWL 2022	WWL 2021
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	100 *	100*
6.2	How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	100 *	10*
6.3	How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	10*
6.4	How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	10 *	50
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	100*	10*
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	10*	10*
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	1000 *	1000*
6.9	How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	1000*	1000*

6.10 How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	100 *	100*
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	1000 *	1000*
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	100 *	10*

5 Year trends

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

5 Year trends: Average pressure

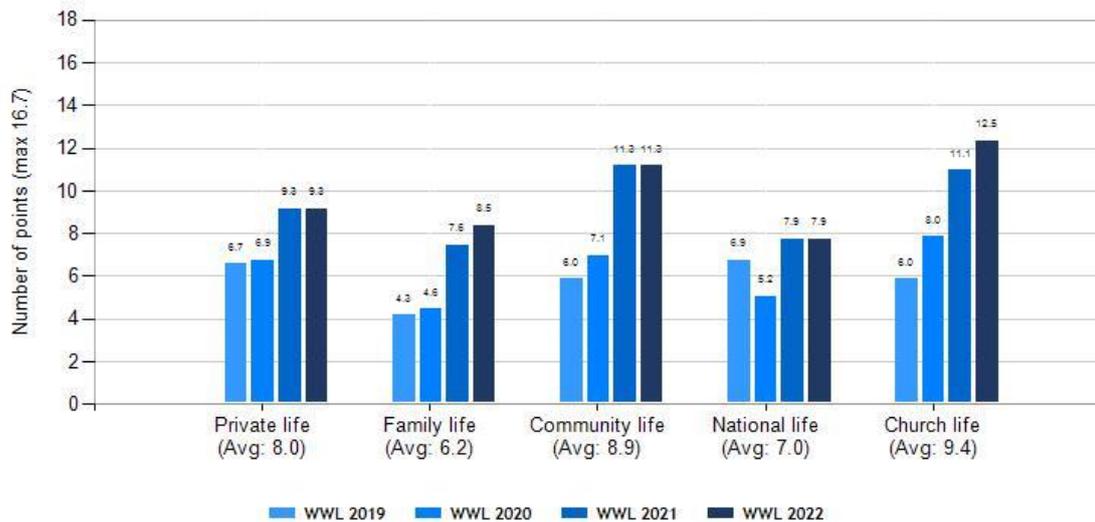
Mozambique: WWL 2018 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2022	9.9
2021	9.4
2020	6.4
2019	6.0
2018	-

The average pressure has been steadily climbing over the past four years which shows that the situation for Christians in Mozambique is getting more challenging, with the intensity as well as frequency of persecution increasing.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life

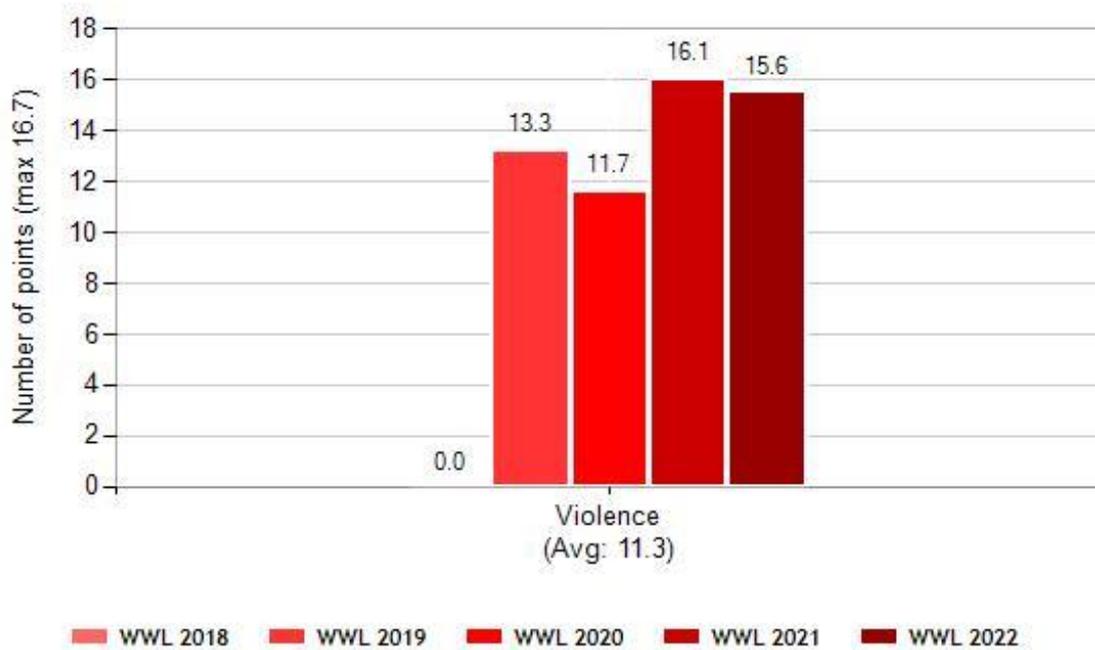
As can be seen in the chart below: The average pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* (9.4 points) followed by the *Community sphere* (8.9 points). This is characteristic of persecution driven by jihadists. Churches are being targeted and Christians struggle to hold services and events inside and outside their church premises. The *Family and National spheres* have the lowest scores for average pressure.

WWL 2019 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern for Mozambique
(Spheres of life)



5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

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



The chart above shows that violence is at an extreme level, with scores in WWL 2022 and WWL 2021 over 15.5 points. Only in the WWL 2020 reporting period did the violence against Christians score below 12.0 points.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions
Political and Legal	Denied custody of children; Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Forced to flee town/country; Trafficking; Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	-
Technological	-

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

Abduction is also commonly used as a tool for violating rights of freedom. During the WWL 2022 reporting period there have been numerous reports of abductions across areas of the country where jihadists and their cells exert influence. In addition to marriage, girls are also used for forced labor. The practice of viewing women more or less as domestic slaves and tools of sexuality has fuelled the abduction of women by insurgents to use for sex as well as domestic chores. This has especially been exacerbated by the rise in violence in the north of the country and has also been a driver of displacement. A country expert explained: "Many displaced young women and girls said they left their communities and fled to Pemba specifically because of the threat of abduction, detention, rape, and forced marriage to al-Shabaab fighters."

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

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	-
Security	Abduction; Military/militia conscription/service against conscience
Social and Cultural	-
Technological	-

According to country experts, *Islamic oppression* is the most common engine of persecution for Christians in Mozambique and Islamic insurgents have recently increased their operations, particularly in the north of the country.

It is reported that Christian men and boys have been particularly targeted by insurgents. Young boys have been abducted and forcibly recruited into militias. This practice has been [confirmed by reports](#) by Human Rights Watch (29 September, 2021). A country expert comments: "The particular nature of insurgency in Cabo Delgado Province [is a risk to male Christians] in that every time the insurgents attack, they mainly target the men and boys in order to recruit fighters from the community."

Persecution of other religious minorities

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2020):

- "Civil society and religious organizations conducted outreach to promote religious tolerance during the year. An interfaith group of leaders led an effort to provide food to needy families during the COVID-19 pandemic, distributing more than 50 tons of meat in several places around the country, in churches, mosques, and community centers. A September 26 interreligious prayer ceremony of Muslim and Christian leaders called for interfaith peace as a key component of economic and political development."

Other religious minorities (such as Hindus, Buddhists and Jews) are very few in number in the country and most are expatriates. There is no specific form of persecution affecting these groups. However, as stated in IRFR 2020:

- "Religious leaders continued to express concern that a draft law on religious practices, proposed in 2019 that was still pending in parliament at year's end, could prevent religious groups that have fewer than 500 followers from registering with the Ministry of Justice. Leaders of small religious communities expressed concern that the registration requirement would prevent them from registering their organizations. According to a religious leader, the draft law would also require followers to have their identities attested by a notary, which would create an administrative barrier to religious practice."

A significant number of the population still follow traditional African religions. Most adherents live in remote parts of the country and there are no reports of persecution. Many are converting to Christianity.

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Islamic oppression

ASWJ is one of the newest jihadist groups in Africa. Emerging in 2017, it has made international headlines by beheading Christians and attacking government security forces and installations. The government's counter-insurgency measures are described as heavy-handed, which is actually helping boost jihadist recruitment. Regional block SADC and Rwanda sent troops to help, but if the government cannot introduce a more comprehensive strategy, it is likely that this Persecution engine will become stronger and could even expand to neighboring countries. Also, if the government only intends to focus on a purely military solution, it might not be effective in the long term.

Clan oppression

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

Dictatorial paranoia

In the October 2019 election, FRELIMO was declared the winner but RENAMO rejected the result. This fragile country has seen so many conflicts and humanitarian crises and any attempt by the ruling party to become more authoritarian can only invite another conflict. Nevertheless, if democracy can become established, then this Persecution engine will fade away (probably then being taken place by *Secular intolerance*). So far no concrete steps have been made in this respect; in fact, the crisis in the northern part of the country is being used as a distraction by the government instead of it concentrating on making rule law and democracy more tangible and accessible to all.

Organized corruption and crime

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

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines description: centers - http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/mozambique#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010®ion_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016%20
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: 53% of girls - <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/mozambique/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: confirmed by reports - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/29/mozambique-isis-linked-group-using-child-soldiers>

Further useful reports

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

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

External Links - Further useful reports

- Further useful reports: Mozambique Islamic militancy – July 2020 - <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Mozambique-Islamic-militancy-WWR-July-2020.pdf>