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## Tanzania: Full Country Dossier

March 2024



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
World Watch List 2024.....	3
Copyright note.....	4
Sources and definitions.....	4
<b>WWL 2024 Situation in brief / Tanzania.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Brief country details .....	5
Map of country.....	5
Dominant persecution engines and drivers .....	6
Brief description of the persecution situation .....	6
Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period .....	6
Specific examples of positive developments .....	7
<b>WWL 2024: Keys to understanding / Tanzania .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Links for general background information.....	7
Recent history .....	7
Political and legal landscape .....	8
Religious landscape .....	11
Economic landscape.....	11
Social and cultural landscape.....	13
Technological landscape .....	14
Security situation .....	15
Trends analysis .....	16
External Links - Keys to understanding .....	16
<b>WWL 2024: Church information / Tanzania .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Christian origins.....	17
Church spectrum today.....	17
Areas where Christians face most difficulties .....	18
Christian communities and how they are affected .....	18
<b>WWL 2024: Persecution Dynamics / Tanzania.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Reporting period .....	19
Position on the World Watch List .....	19
Persecution engines .....	19
Drivers of persecution.....	21
The Persecution pattern.....	22

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life.....	23
Violence.....	27
5 Year trends .....	28
Gender-specific religious persecution / Female .....	30
Gender-specific religious persecution / Male .....	32
Persecution of other religious minorities.....	32
Future outlook.....	33
External Links - Persecution Dynamics.....	33
<b>Further useful reports.....</b>	<b>33</b>

# Introduction

## World Watch List 2024

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	12.8	96	98	96	94	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	10.6	93	92	91	92	92
3	Libya	15.9	16.0	15.9	16.1	16.4	10.2	91	88	91	92	90
4	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.7	12.8	89	89	88	88	87
5	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.9	89	89	88	87	85
6	Nigeria	13.5	13.9	14.5	14.9	14.4	16.7	88	88	87	85	80
7	Pakistan	13.2	13.9	15.0	15.1	13.1	16.7	87	86	87	88	88
8	Sudan	14.1	14.2	14.9	14.9	15.5	13.3	87	83	79	79	85
9	Iran	15.0	14.6	13.5	15.8	16.5	10.9	86	86	85	86	85
10	Afghanistan	15.7	15.9	15.2	16.3	16.6	4.6	84	84	98	94	93
11	India	12.2	12.6	13.3	14.8	13.2	16.5	83	82	82	83	83
12	Syria	13.4	14.3	13.9	14.3	14.2	11.1	81	80	78	81	82
13	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.8	15.7	16.6	3.3	81	80	81	78	79
14	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	12.8	15.1	15.6	79	76	70	67	66
15	Algeria	14.4	14.1	11.5	14.0	15.6	9.8	79	73	71	70	73
16	Iraq	14.2	14.4	14.0	14.8	13.9	7.8	79	76	78	82	76
17	Myanmar	12.2	10.6	13.4	13.7	13.0	16.1	79	80	79	74	73
18	Maldives	15.6	15.5	13.6	16.0	16.4	0.9	78	77	77	77	78
19	China	13.0	10.0	12.8	14.6	16.0	11.1	78	77	76	74	70
20	Burkina Faso	11.7	9.7	13.2	11.5	13.8	15.6	75	71	68	67	66
21	Laos	11.6	10.6	13.2	14.3	14.0	11.3	75	68	69	71	72
22	Cuba	13.2	8.7	13.8	13.3	15.1	8.7	73	70	66	62	52
23	Mauritania	14.6	14.2	13.8	14.2	14.2	1.3	72	72	70	71	68
24	Morocco	13.2	13.8	11.7	12.8	14.4	5.4	71	69	69	67	66
25	Uzbekistan	14.6	12.7	13.9	12.6	15.5	1.7	71	71	71	71	73
26	Bangladesh	12.4	10.6	12.5	10.8	10.4	14.1	71	69	68	67	63
27	Niger	9.4	9.6	14.5	7.7	13.1	15.9	70	70	68	62	60
28	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	12.2	15.6	70	70	68	66	68
29	Turkmenistan	14.2	12.3	13.6	13.9	15.5	0.6	70	70	69	70	70
30	Nicaragua	12.1	7.6	13.2	13.2	14.1	9.6	70	65	56	51	41
31	Oman	14.3	14.0	10.6	13.3	14.0	3.1	69	65	66	63	62
32	Ethiopia	9.9	9.7	12.6	10.4	12.1	14.4	69	66	66	65	63
33	Tunisia	12.3	13.2	10.2	12.4	13.8	6.9	69	67	66	67	64
34	Colombia	11.1	8.6	12.9	11.3	10.4	14.1	68	71	68	67	62
35	Vietnam	11.3	9.4	12.4	13.8	14.2	7.2	68	70	71	72	72
36	Bhutan	13.1	12.1	12.4	14.1	14.3	2.2	68	66	67	64	61
37	Mexico	11.5	8.5	12.5	11.1	10.6	14.1	68	67	65	64	60
38	Egypt	12.5	13.7	11.4	11.9	10.9	7.8	68	68	71	75	76
39	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.0	68	68	65	63	43
40	Qatar	14.2	14.2	10.5	13.2	14.4	0.6	67	68	74	67	66
41	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	13.0	15.9	67	67	66	64	56
42	Indonesia	10.9	12.3	11.5	10.2	9.7	11.5	66	68	68	63	60
43	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	8.0	13.1	15.9	66	65	65	64	60
44	Brunei	15.0	14.7	10.0	10.8	14.1	1.3	66	65	64	64	63
45	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	1.1	66	66	63	62	57
46	Tajikistan	13.8	12.6	12.3	12.9	13.4	0.6	66	66	65	66	65
47	Kazakhstan	13.3	11.8	12.1	12.8	14.3	1.1	65	65	64	64	64
48	Jordan	12.9	14.2	10.5	12.4	12.8	2.2	65	65	66	64	64
49	Malaysia	13.0	14.1	11.5	12.2	11.1	2.4	64	66	63	63	62
50	Turkey	13.0	11.5	11.6	13.2	11.4	3.1	64	66	65	69	63

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020
51	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	12.4	63	64	63	62	61
52	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	14.4	62	63	61	58	55
53	Nepal	12.1	10.4	9.5	13.2	12.3	4.4	62	61	64	66	64
54	Kuwait	13.1	13.6	9.4	12.0	12.2	0.9	61	64	64	63	62
55	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.3	1.1	61	60	59	56	56
56	Chad	11.6	8.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	10.6	61	58	55	53	56
57	UAE	13.3	13.4	9.5	11.3	12.8	0.7	61	62	62	62	60
58	Sri Lanka	12.9	9.2	10.8	11.5	9.7	5.9	60	57	63	62	65
59	Azerbaijan	13.2	9.9	9.6	11.9	13.6	1.7	60	59	60	56	57
60	Palestinian Territories	13.1	13.3	9.7	10.7	12.1	0.9	60	60	59	58	60
61	Kyrgyzstan	13.2	10.3	11.3	10.5	12.2	1.3	59	59	58	58	57
62	Russian Federation	12.7	7.7	10.6	12.8	12.9	1.7	58	57	56	57	60
63	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	11.7	9.4	58	57	50	42	42
64	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	12.8	57	55	52	48	48
65	Bahrain	12.0	13.2	8.6	11.3	8.5	1.1	55	55	57	56	55
66	Honduras	7.9	4.7	12.2	7.3	9.9	12.6	55	53	48	46	39
67	Venezuela	6.0	4.4	11.1	10.0	10.8	10.7	53	56	51	39	42
68	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	11.0	8.9	52	49	44	43	41
69	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	7.2	52	48	43	47	45
70	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	8.8	15.9	52	51	48	47	48
71	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	7.2	52	52	51	46	43
72	Lebanon	11.0	10.2	7.0	6.1	6.6	7.2	48	40	35	34	35
73	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	3.7	47	44	44	43	43
74	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	7.6	15.6	46	46	43	43	44
75	Belarus	9.6	3.8	5.8	9.7	13.3	3.3	46	43	33	30	28
76	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	3.3	44	44	42	42	42
77	Ukraine	5.5	4.8	8.0	11.6	11.6	2.8	44	37	37	34	33
78	Israel	9.8	8.6	5.8	6.3	6.9	6.7	44	38	41	40	38

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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 2024 reporting period was 01 October 2022 - 30 September 2023.
- 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 can be found on the research pages of the Open Doors website: <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/> and on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom): <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>.

# WWL 2024 Situation in brief / Tanzania

## Brief country details

Tanzania: Population (UN estimate for 2023)	Christians	Chr%
65,136,000	36,348,000	55.8

Data source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed March 2023)

## Map of country



Tanzania: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2024	62	52
WWL 2023	63	53
WWL 2022	61	55
WWL 2021	58	57
WWL 2020	55	60

## Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Tanzania:	
Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Islamic oppression	Non-Christian religious leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, One's own (extended) family, Violent religious groups
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

All WWL categories of Christian communities in Tanzania are experiencing persecution to some degree; however, Christians with a Muslim background on Zanzibar are affected the most severely. Bullying, harassment and sometimes physical attacks have been observed in the country. The conservative Islamic presence has influenced policymakers to adopt policies that impact Christians directly or indirectly at the local and national level.

**Islamic oppression (Strong), blended with Clan oppression (Medium):** Jihadists from both Tanzania and Mozambique have been targeting Christians. Converts from Islam to Christianity have been expelled from family homes in Zanzibar and the Coastal region. Muslims require strict adherence to modest dress codes and Christians are bullied, discriminated against and ostracized in the community.

**Dictatorial paranoia (Medium):** Church activities are monitored by state authorities. Church leaders still fear openly criticizing the government concerning social injustice as this has led to harassment in the past.

### Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

The administration has significantly curtailed numerous freedoms, as documented in reports by Amnesty International for 2022, Freedom House in 2023, and Human Rights Watch in 2023.

In Zanzibar and the Coastal area, individuals converting from Islam to Christianity have faced expulsion from their familial residences.

Young people have orchestrated mob assaults, as well as engaged in bullying and harassment, aimed at Christians.

## Specific examples of positive developments

President Hassan, who was appointed president after Magufuli's death in March 2021, has taken some measures to respond to rights concerns. As reported by Human Rights Watch (HRW 2023 Tanzania country chapter): "President Samia Suluhu Hassan's government lifted the ban on newspapers, ended a decades-long prohibition on pregnant students and adolescent mothers attending school, and released a political opposition leader from detention. However, the government continued arresting opposition supporters."

## WWL 2024: Keys to understanding / Tanzania

### Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International 2022/23 Tanzania report	AI Tanzania 2022	<a href="https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/tanzania/report-tanzania/">https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/tanzania/report-tanzania/</a>	13 July 2023
BBC News Tanzania profile - updated 2 May 2023	BBC Tanzania profile	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14095776">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14095776</a>	13 July 2023
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2024 – covering 137 countries	BTI Tanzania Report 2024	<a href="https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/TZA">https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/TZA</a>	25 March 2024
CIA World Factbook Tanzania - updated 18 March 2024	World Factbook Tanzania	<a href="https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tanzania/">https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tanzania/</a>	25 March 2024
Crisis24 Tanzania report (Garda World)	Crisis24 Tanzania report	<a href="https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/tanzania">https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/tanzania</a>	13 July 2023
Economist Intelligence Unit Tanzania summary 2023	EIU Tanzania summary	<a href="https://country.eiu.com/tanzania">https://country.eiu.com/tanzania</a>	13 July 2023
FFP's Fragile States Index 2023 – covering 179 countries	FSI 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/">https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/</a>	13 July 2023
Freedom House's 2023 Democracy index – covering 29 countries, Tanzania not included	Democracy Index 2023	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores</a>	
Freedom House's 2023 Global Freedom Index – covering 210 countries	Global Freedom Index 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/country/tanzania/freedom-world/2023">https://freedomhouse.org/country/tanzania/freedom-world/2023</a>	13 July 2023
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2023 report – covering 70 countries, Tanzania not included	Freedom on the Net 2023	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores</a>	
Georgetown's Women, Peace and Security Index 2021/2022 – covering 170 countries	GIWPS 2021 Tanzania profile	<a href="https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/tanzania/">https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/tanzania/</a>	13 July 2023
Girls Not Brides Tanzania report	Girls Not Brides Tanzania	<a href="https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/tanzania/">https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/tanzania/</a>	13 July 2023
Internet World Stats available in 2023	IWS 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#tz">https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#tz</a>	13 July 2023
RSF's 2023 World Press Freedom Index – covering 180 countries	World Press Freedom 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://rsf.org/en/tanzania">https://rsf.org/en/tanzania</a>	13 July 2023
Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index – covering 180 countries	CPI 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/tza">https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/tza</a>	25 March 2024
UNDP: Human Development Report Tanzania - data updates as of 8 September 2022	UNDP HDR Tanzania	<a href="https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data/#/countries/TZA">https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data/#/countries/TZA</a>	13 July 2023
US State Department's 2022 International Religious Freedom Report Tanzania	IRFR 2022 Tanzania	<a href="https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/tanzania/">https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/tanzania/</a>	13 July 2023
USCIRF 2022 country reports – covering 15 CPC / 12 SWL, Tanzania not included	USCIRF 2022	<a href="https://www.uscifr.gov/countries">https://www.uscifr.gov/countries</a>	
World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook Tanzania - April 2023	Macro Poverty Outlook 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2efc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-tza.pdf">https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2efc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-tza.pdf</a>	13 July 2023
World Bank Tanzania data – 2021	World Bank Tanzania data	<a href="https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfileId=b450fd57tbar=ydd=yinf=nzm=ncountry=TZA">https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfileId=b450fd57tbar=ydd=yinf=nzm=ncountry=TZA</a>	25 March 2024
World Bank Tanzania overview – updated 14 September 2023	World Bank overview 2023 Tanzania	<a href="https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/overview">https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/overview</a>	25 March 2024

## Recent history

Shortly after achieving independence from Britain in 1961, Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964. In 1967, President Julius Nyerere made the Arusha Declaration, unveiling his political philosophy of egalitarianism, socialism and self-reliance. From 1965, presidential elections were held every five years with a one-party system. In response to opposition and international pressure, a multi-party system was introduced in 1992. The October 1995 presidential and legislative elections in Zanzibar, were the first to be held since the restoration of multiparty democracy. The ruling party claimed victory and Benjamin Mkapa became the president despite claims of voting irregularities. Benjamin Mkapa served for two terms until he was replaced by Jakaya Kikwete in 2005.

In October 2015, John Magufuli and his ruling party [won](#) the presidential election with 58% of the votes (BBC News, 29 October 2015). In Zanzibar, where life for Christians has always been considerably harder than on the mainland, the results of the 2015 election for the island's parliament and the president were [annulled](#) due to irregularities (BBC News, 28 October 2015).



Since 2015, when the 5th government assumed office, there have been many changes in the political, economic, social and technological arena. There have also been changes in policy practices and the law which directly or indirectly affect Christians and influence the level of freedom of religion in Tanzania. However, the country failed to hold a constitutional referendum which had been scheduled for April 2015 (with opposition parties and the Catholic Church saying they would campaign against it). Neither in 2019 nor 2020 was the draft Constitution presented to the public for voting. It incorporates a provision that allows the application of Sharia courts in the whole country - a change from the previous approach which had limited the application of Sharia courts to Zanzibar, an approximately 99% Muslim majority Island. Church leaders believe that if this draft is adopted in this form, it will have a massive impact on Christians.

Despite difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Tanzania decided to go ahead with elections scheduled for 28 October 2020. President John Magufuli won re-election as the candidate for the governing Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party but suddenly died in March 2021 at the age of 61, after suffering briefly from heart complications (according to reports). He was succeeded by his deputy, Vice-president Samia Suluhu Hassan, who was sworn in as the new president within 24 hours as constitutionally required on 19 March 2021. President Hassan is expected to serve the remainder of Magufuli's five-year term (BBC News, 18 March 2021).

In 2023, there were warnings of possible attacks by violent Islamic militants in Tanzania. For example, in its travel advisory note updated on 13 September, 2023, the [UK foreign travel advisory](#) noted: "Extremists linked to the Islamic terrorist group Al-Shabaab based in Somalia pose a threat across the East Africa region, and are thought to be active in Tanzania. Attacks by IS-Mozambique, who are based in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique, are possible near Tanzania's border with this area of Mozambique." The advisory also stated that there is also thought to be some support for the Islamic State group (IS) in the country.

## Political and legal landscape

The United Republic of Tanzania is a multiparty republic consisting of the mainland and the semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago, with Unguja and Pemba as its main islands. The nation is an electoral democracy considered "partly free" by Freedom House (Global Freedom Index 2022). There has been a general improvement in the state of political rights in the country over the past several years. Even so, Tanzanian authorities restrict the rights of freedom of assembly and expression. Moreover, state security forces have been involved in the torture and extrajudicial killings of civilians, and pre-planned civil demonstrations are generally banned. Likewise, freedom of the press has been increasingly suppressed and officials at times censor the content of radio and television broadcasts. A serious level of impunity exists in Tanzania: Virtually no police officer or other official security personnel has been convicted for extrajudicial killings since 2002, despite the fact that there have been numerous reports of law enforcement officials committing unlawful killings, as well other forms of mistreatment and physical abuse.

In Tanzania's unitary presidential democratic republic, the late president – John Magufuli [5th president] – served both as head of state and as head of government, giving him a very significant level of power. He was most vocal against freedom of speech; in just three years, over four media outlets were shut down either indefinitely or for long periods of time. In March 2018, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority began requiring bloggers and digital pub-

lishers to register with the government and pay a \$920 license fee. The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations also required Internet cafes to install surveillance cameras, and bloggers to report on-site visitors and other operational details. All these efforts were in a move to curtail any criticism of the government (which Christian leaders had also been involved in). These signs indicated a strong progression towards the formation of a dictatorial regime.

Since taking over power in March 2021, President Samia Hassan has reversed a number of repressive policies put in place by her predecessor, whose administration was criticized for its heavy-handed crackdown on the press. She ordered that officials “free” some previously banned media outlets and further indicated that her country's response to the COVID-19 crisis would henceforth be “based on science”, whereas John Magufuli had systematically played down the seriousness of the pandemic. However, the arrest of main [opposition party leader](#) (whose party was preparing to hold a conference on constitutional reform in Mwaza, northern Tanzania) and his detention on terrorism charges has diminished the democratic credentials of the new president (HRW, 22 July 2021). This was followed by the arrest of [several more members](#) of Tanzania’s main opposition party Chadema, the latest crackdown on a group pushing for constitutional reform in the country (Al-Jazeera, 4 September 2021).

In 2022, the government reversed such authoritarian tendencies. Calls on the government from within and outside the country to free Freeman Mbowe led the prosecution to drop charges against him and the court to order his [release after seven months](#) in detention (Al-Jazeera, 4 March 2022). Moreover, recent rapid diplomacy by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, [reversing the isolationist](#) posture of her predecessor to reengage with the international community and woo foreign investment, has brought hope of progress (Al-Jazeera, 3 May 2022).

According to AI Tanzania 2022:

- The government maintained its blanket ban, introduced by the late president in 2016, on political parties organizing rallies and other political activities. The state continued to target online media outlets, using repressive regulations despite earlier promises to reform media laws. Security forces used excessive force in Loliondo division, in the northern Arusha region, during forced evictions of the Indigenous Maasai community while intimidating human rights defenders and journalists. The pledge to lift the discriminatory ban on pregnant girls and young mothers from attending school was not implemented. Plans to construct the East African Crude Oil Pipeline continued despite its potential threat to the environment and the livelihoods and health of local people. Individuals and organizations failed by the national legal system were blocked from seeking justice directly at the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

As explained by Human Rights Watch (HRW 2023 Tanzania country chapter):

- **Freedom of expression:** Despite some positive moves like lifting bans on certain newspapers, freedom of expression remains stifled in Tanzania. The media faces heavy restrictions under laws like the 2016 Media Services Act. Online media outlets, such as DarMpya, have been suspended for not renewing their licenses after covering sensitive topics. Moreover, investigative journalist Azory Gwanda, who was investigating alleged

human rights violations, disappeared in 2017, and there have been no meaningful investigations into his case.

- **Government opponents:** Authorities have targeted opposition figures and activists. Freeman Mbowe, the chairperson of the main opposition party, Chadema, was held in pretrial detention for over seven months on terrorism charges. Other members of the party were also arrested and detained for hours, with some allegedly beaten by the police while in custody.
- **Children's rights:** While some progress has been made to protect the rights of children, particularly regarding the education of pregnant students, significant gaps remain. Mandatory pregnancy testing at schools continues, resulting in the expulsion of pregnant and married girls. The government also has yet to outlaw child marriage, despite a 2016 High Court decision advocating for such a change.
- **Land rights:** In 2022, the government went ahead with the forcible relocation of pastoral Maasai communities in the northern Arusha region, in spite of international criticism and legal injunctions. Protests against the relocation were met with threats of arrest, and in one instance, the use of live ammunition and tear gas.

A report by Amnesty International released on [6 June 2023](#), condemned the Tanzanian authorities for the forced evictions of the Maasai Indigenous community from their ancestral lands in Loliondo, a part of Tanzania's northern Ngorongoro district. The report states that the evictions were carried out brutally, without due process, and left 70,000 people without access to essential grazing lands. Tigere Chagutah, Amnesty International's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, emphasized that the security forces used excessive force and completely disregarded the consent and rights of the affected Maasai people during these forced evictions.

### **Gender perspective**

The Tanzanian political and legal landscape remains restrictive towards women and girls. Statutory, customary and Islamic laws constitute the overarching legislative framework that governs marriage and divorce laws. Whilst on the decline, child marriage remains an issue of concern, with 31% of girls marrying before the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides Tanzania). In June 2018 the Constitutional Court ruled that child marriage was illegal and the minimum age of marriage should be raised to 18. Whilst challenged in 2018 by the Attorney General, who argued it interfered with the 'culture of the land,' it was upheld. It should be noted however that customary marriages are exempt from the law, which remain prevalent. Tanzania further lacks comprehensive legislation that specifically addresses domestic violence, marital rape or violence against women.

## Religious landscape

Tanzania: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	36,348,000	55.8
Muslim	21,050,000	32.3
Hindu	577,000	0.9
Buddhist	14,400	0.0
Ethno-religionist	6,557,000	10.1
Jewish	300	0.0
Bahai	287,000	0.4
Atheist	38,300	0.1
Agnostic	199,000	0.3
Other	65,850	0.1
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Data source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed March 2023)

Tanzania is a majority Christian nation, with an estimated Christian population of 55.8% according to the World Christian Database (accessed March 2023). However, the religious demography is very different when comparing mainland Tanzania with the island Zanzibar. While most of the mainland population is Christian (with a Muslim population concentrated in the coastal region), the vast majority of residents of Zanzibar are adherents of Islam. This Muslim majority archipelago has become a region with significant challenges for the Christian population over the last few years. For example, Christians have not received equal access to justice due to the bias against Christians in court and Christians have been punished for cooking during daylight hours of the month of Ramadan.

## Economic landscape

According to World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook Tanzania:

- **GDP growth:** Tanzania's economy showed resilience in 2022, growing by 4.6%, an improvement from the 4.3% seen in 2021. GDP per capita also increased, rising by 1.4%, and there was a modest 0.3 percentage point reduction in the international poverty rate. Despite these gains, high commodity prices acted as a drag on the economy's full potential. Sustaining this growth will largely depend on the government's ability to facilitate private sector investment for job creation. Additionally, the economy is grappling with headwinds from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which continues to impact global conditions.

- **Poverty:** The low elasticity of poverty reduction in relation to economic growth suggests that growth alone is not sufficient to lift households out of poverty. Policy measures aimed at making growth more inclusive are crucial. This could include increased public spending on social sectors such as healthcare and education, as well as investment in rural infrastructure, to ensure that the benefits of growth are more evenly distributed among all households, including the poor.
- **Outlook:**
  - The GDP growth for Tanzania is projected at 5.1% in 2023, or 2.2% per capita, driven by increased investments and better trade terms. The country is expected to hit a 6% growth rate only by 2025. The current account is forecasted at 6.1% of GDP due to high import demands supporting public investment.
  - While the fiscal deficit is predicted to narrow to 3% of GDP in 2023, this overlooks outstanding VAT refunds and payment arrears, estimated at 3-4% of 2022's GDP. These issues are crucial for fiscal management.
  - Major risks include a deteriorating external environment and slow domestic policy implementation. Real GDP growth could vary between 4.5% and 5.5% in 2023 under different scenarios. Global supply shocks, like the Ukraine conflict, and domestic policy lags pose additional risks.
  - Poverty is projected to decrease by 0.6 percentage points in 2023, based on a 2.2% per capita GDP growth rate. A new nationwide household budget survey is planned for 2023/24 to update official poverty rates.

According to Heritage Foundation's [2023 Index of Economic Freedom](#):

- Tanzania's economic freedom score for 2023 is 60.0, placing it 83rd globally and 6th in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. This marks a slight improvement over last year and positions the country above the world average. However, despite strides made in income growth and poverty reduction over the past decade, the government appears to lack the dedication required for the comprehensive institutional reforms needed for sustainable economic growth. Persistent issues, such as inefficient public finance management and an inadequate legal system, continue to hamper regulatory efficiency and long-term development.

According to [Africa Developments Bank Group](#):

- Tanzania's GDP growth slowed to 4.7% in 2022, impacted by Russia's Ukraine invasion and rising commodity prices. Inflation increased to 4.3%, and monetary policy was tightened to contain it. The fiscal deficit narrowed to 3.4% of GDP, funded by domestic and external borrowing, while public debt remained stable at around 40.9% of GDP. The current account deficit widened due to increased oil prices. International reserves and poverty rates worsened, and income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, increased.

### Gender perspective

Women remain particularly economically disadvantaged in Tanzania, primarily due to patrilineal inheritance practices; women do not have equal inheritance rights under either statutory, customary or Islamic law. Projects such as one the World Bank recently endorsed for \$150 million funding, [Land Tenure Improvement Project](#) (LTIP), will benefit women by helping them

to secure their land holding and use rights, both as individual holders and beneficiaries of communal land rights (World Bank Press Release, 21 December 2021).

## Social and cultural landscape

According to UNDP HDR Tanzania and World Factbook Tanzania:

- **Main ethnic groups - mainland:** African 99% (of which 95% are Bantu consisting of more than 130 tribes), other 1% (consisting of Asian, European, and Arab); **Zanzibar:** Arab, African, mixed Arab and African.
- **Main languages:** Kiswahili or Swahili (official), Kiunguja (the name for Swahili in Zanzibar), English (official, the primary language of commerce, administration, and higher education), Arabic (widely spoken in Zanzibar), many local languages.
- **Median age:** 18.2 years
- **Urban population:** 36.7% of total population (2022 est.)
- **Rate of urbanization:** 4.89% annual rate of change (2020-2025 est.)
- **Expected years of schooling:** 8.1 years (there is gender parity in terms of education access. However, in 2017 President Magufuli banned girls from school if found to be pregnant. The Government has since committed to finding ways for pregnant girls to return to school (HRW 2021).
- **Literacy rate, adult (15 years of age and older):** 77.9%
- **Employment to population ratio (15 years of age and older):** 81.8%
- **Unemployment, total of labor force:** 2.0%
- **Unemployment, youth (15-24 years old):** 3.6%

The country is facing a major demographic challenge in the form of a rapidly growing youth population. Growing urbanization likewise puts greater pressure on the government to address the health, employment, and social needs of those living in the impoverished city slums. In its country overview, the World Bank states:

- The national poverty rate is estimated to have declined marginally from 27.1 percent in 2020 to 27.0 percent in 2021, driven by the recovery of employment and non-farm business revenue.
- “Urban poverty rates are significantly higher among female-headed households (20.3 percent) than among male-headed households (14 percent), and the share of employed women dropped from 79 percent in 2004-05 to 72 percent in 2015-16. Women are much more likely than men to be engaged in unpaid labor, and women with wage jobs tend to earn less than their male counterparts. Tanzania’s average fertility rate is high at 4.8 children per adult woman, and elevated fertility rates – including high rates of adolescent pregnancy – are correlated with decreased economic activity, lower levels of education, poverty, and diminished female agency.”
- “While the poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (\$1.35 per person per day in PPP) has declined modestly over time, falling from 28.2% of population in 2012 to 26.1 in 2019, Tanzania’s rapid population growth has caused the number of people living below the national poverty line to steadily increase. In 2020, the pandemic-induced economic slowdown caused the poverty rate to rise to an estimated 27.2%, compounding the effect of population growth on the absolute number of people living in poverty. Notwithstanding,

following two decades of sustained growth, Tanzania reached an important milestone in July 2020, when it formally graduated from low-income country to lower-middle-income country status".

According to [UNHCR Operational Update Tanzania December 2023](#):

- **Refugees:** "Tanzania hosts some 241,397 refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from Burundi and DRC, who live in two camps, while some 70,000 refugees from the 1972 Burundian population live in villages and three old settlements in Kigoma, Katavi."

According to UNDP HDR Tanzania:

- **Human Development Index (HDI):** Tanzania is ranked 163rd out of 189 countries with a HDI value of 0.529
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 65.5 years
- **Gender Development index (GDI):** 0.948
- **Gender inequality index (GII): 0.556.** The GII measures gender inequalities in three important aspects of human development—reproductive health, empowerment and economic status. In 2019 Tanzania ranked 140th out of 162 countries.

### Gender perspective

Within Tanzania's patriarchal context, women and girls continue to assume subservient roles within the family and community sphere. Domestic abuse is reportedly high in Tanzania, yet is rarely made public due to widespread impunity for perpetrators and fear of reprisals ([CEDAW, 2016](#)). Social and cultural norms impact whether or not a woman pursues divorce (and assets) as it is viewed as improper for women to demand a share of her 'husband's property' and invites community stigma. Thus many women become destitute if a marriage breaks down, or stay trapped in abusive marriages.

### Technological landscape

Different sources give varying statistics: According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2023):

- **Internet usage:** As of December 2021, Tanzania had 23,142,960 internet users, making up 37.0% of the population.
- **Facebook usage:** There were 6,378,400 Facebook subscribers as of January 2022, with a penetration rate of 10.2%.

According to [Data Reportal Digital 2023 Tanzania](#):

- There were 21.00 million internet users in Tanzania at the start of 2023, when internet penetration stood at 31.6%.
- Tanzania was home to 4.90 million social media users in January 2023, equating to 7.4% of the total population.
- A total of 57.42 million cellular mobile connections were active in Tanzania in early 2023, with this figure equivalent to 86.4% of the total population.

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (Publication date: March 2024):

- "[P]olicy reforms have led to the country having one of the most liberal telecom sectors in Africa. The government has also sought to increase broadband penetration by a range of measures, including the reduction in VAT charged on the sale of smartphones and other devices, and reductions in the cost of data. Public opposition to a controversial tax on m-money transactions forced the government in mid-2022 to reduce charges."
- "The landing of the first international submarine cables in the country some years ago revolutionised the telecom market, which up to that point had entirely depended on expensive satellite connections."
- "The government continues to invest in the national backbone network, aiming to have 15,000km in service by the end of 2023, and to provide ongoing connectivity to more countries in the region."

Tanzania's technological landscape is advancing dramatically. Chinese investment in the country (see above: *Economic landscape*) is making the construction of infrastructure affordable.

## Security situation

Over the past few years, Tanzania has faced a series of security challenges that include not just domestic issues but also transnational threats. One of the most significant developments has been the diminishing influence of the radical Islamic group UAMSHO, which previously used Zanzibar as a launchpad for its activities. However, the decline of UAMSHO has been offset by the emergence of new threats.

Particularly alarming is the increased presence of Al-Shabaab cells within the country. Known for its extremist views and violent actions, Al-Shabaab's presence has raised alarm bells within security circles. The group's known capability for complex attacks in countries like Somalia and Kenya puts Tanzania in a precarious position, given its relatively porous borders.

In addition to the internal threats, Tanzania is grappling with the spillover of jihadist activities from neighboring Mozambique. A report from October 2020 stated that terrorists entered Tanzanian territory via the Rovuma river, burning houses and claiming military and civilian lives. This cross-border insurgency by groups affiliating themselves with the Islamic State group (IS) poses a growing concern for national security.

For the Christian community, these developments have specific implications. Muslim extremist groups often demand the imposition of Sharia law, creating a tense environment for Christians. There is also a rising threat from radicalized citizens, especially in regions like Zanzibar and the coast, where the demographic makeup is predominantly Muslim.

Kidnappings are another significant concern. Whether it's the abduction of Africa's youngest billionaire in 2018 or the horrifying kidnappings of children for witchcraft, often targeting those with albinism, the social fabric is strained. While it remains unclear if Christians are disproportionately targeted in these kidnappings, the government has pledged to address the issue.



## Trends analysis

### 1) Increasing tension between Christians and Muslims

Tanzania, a predominantly Christian country, is seeing escalating tension between Christians and Muslims, particularly in coastal areas and Zanzibar. This tension is further heightened by the government of Zanzibar's recent establishment of an Islamic holiday, which has caused concern among Christian communities. Additionally, Christians who voice opinions that do not align with government perspectives find themselves subject to questioning, adding to the sense of imbalance. Some Christian politicians feel that the power dynamics are shifting unfavorably due to high-ranking Muslim officials, including the President. While the appointment of Christian Dr. Philip Mpango as Vice President has somewhat eased tensions, Christians in specific regions still feel they are being targeted by Muslim radicals.

### 2) Islamic militancy and emerging threats

Islamic militancy in Tanzania has been relatively contained, but the landscape is changing. Al-Shabaab cells within the nation present an imminent threat, particularly for Christians who are concerned that they may be selectively targeted. The situation is further complicated by jihadist activities in neighboring Mozambique. These activities manifest in two ways: firstly, cross-border raids into Tanzania are increasing, and secondly, the unrest in Mozambique could inspire a resurgence of Muslim extremist groups within Tanzania, such as UAMSHO. The government's efforts to counter these threats need to be backed by comprehensive political reforms that tackle the root causes of radicalization and tension. Failure to do so could not only allow local extremist entities like UAMSHO to gain traction but could also encourage the spill-over of jihadist activities from Mozambique into Tanzanian territory. These tensions and threats have international repercussions as well; countries like the United Kingdom have already issued travel advisories cautioning against visits to Tanzania due to terrorism risks. Addressing these complex issues will require not just military and security measures, but also social, political and religious reforms.

## External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: won - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34669468>
- Recent history: annulled - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34656934>
- Recent history: UK foreign travel advisory - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/tanzania/safety-and-security>
- Political and legal landscape: opposition party leader - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/22/tanzanian-opposition-leader-supporters-arrested>
- Political and legal landscape: several more members - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/4/tanzania-in-new-crackdown-on-opposition-party>
- Political and legal landscape: release after seven months - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/4/tanzanian-opposition-leader-freed-after-seven-months-in-custody>
- Political and legal landscape: reversing the isolationist - <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/5/3/back-online-tanzanias-president-fixes-predecessors>
- Political and legal landscape: 6 June 2023 - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/tanzanian-authorities-brutally-violated-maasai-amid-forced-evictions/>
- Economic landscape: 2023 Index of Economic Freedom: - <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/tanzania>

- Economic landscape: Africa Developments Bank Group - <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-east-africa-tanzania/tanzania-economic-outlook>
- Economic landscape: Land Tenure Improvement Project - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/12/21/tanzania-new-world-bank-financing-to-secure-land-rights-for-up-to-two-million-citizens>
- Social and cultural landscape: UNHCR Operational Update Tanzania December 2023 - <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106909>
- Social and cultural landscape: CEDAW, 2016 - [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/TZA/CO/7-8&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/TZA/CO/7-8&Lang=En)
- Technological landscape: Data Reportal Digital 2023 Tanzania - <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-tanzania#:~:text=Data%20shows%20that%20Tanzania's%20population,percent%20lived%20in%20rural%20areas.>
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Tanzania-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses>

## WWL 2024: Church information / Tanzania

### Christian origins

Christianity originally came to Tanzania with the Portuguese early in the 16th century. However, the Portuguese Roman Catholics were not active in evangelizing the indigenous population and hence the presence of Christianity was superficial. In 1844, two German Protestants - Johann Krapf and Johan Rebmann - came to Tanzania as missionary-explorers representing the British-based Church Missionary Society. However, there was little growth in the Church until 1860, when Roman Catholic priests came to Zanzibar, and 1863 when the Catholic missionary society 'Holy Ghost Fathers' was established there. Tanzania was also territory explored by David Livingstone on behalf of the London Missionary Society in the 19th century. Following the official German occupation of Tanganyika in 1885, several Lutheran missionary societies flourished. In 1938 seven churches came together and formed the Federation of Lutheran Churches of Tanganyika.

### Church spectrum today

Tanzania: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	13,300	0.0
Catholic	18,484,000	50.9
Protestant	19,565,000	53.8
Independent	1,490,000	4.1
Unaffiliated	319,000	0.9
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-3,523,000	-9.7
<b>Total</b> <i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>	<b>36,348,300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Evangelical movement	10,308,000	28.4
Renewalist movement	7,039,000	19.4

Data source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed March 2023)

**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.

The Roman Catholic church, the Lutheran church and Seventh-day Adventists are some of the main Christian denominations in mainland Tanzania. There are also numerous Pentecostal Christian groups.

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The island of Zanzibar and mainland coastal areas (including Dar es Salaam) are the main areas where Christians face major difficulties when living out their faith.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

All categories of Christian communities in the country face persecution in one way or another.

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** These are mainly found on the islands such as Pemba and Mafia. They keep separate from Christians with a Muslim background because if they were to mix, their security would be jeopardized. Also, the community leaders on the Island of Zanzibar monitor expatriates. In other parts of the country, expatriate Christians are not involuntarily isolated.

**Historical Christian communities:** Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches face persecution both from the Muslim community in Zanzibar and from the national government (through curtailment of their activities) if they accuse the government of acting unjustly.

**Converts to Christianity:** In Muslim dominated areas (Zanzibar and the mainland coastal region) Christians with a Muslim background suffer permanent pressure and often violence. Persecution is mainly driven by Islamic religious leaders and the surrounding Muslim community.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** Non-traditional Christian communities are the fastest growing in the country. At least 8% of the population belong to these Pentecostal, Evangelical, Baptist and non-denominational churches. These churches face persecution from Islamic sources and also - on a much weaker scale - from Historical Christian churches (for instance, when their theology and activities are publicly criticized). They experience many challenges, e.g. in obtaining permission to build new churches and in getting permits for assembly and preaching.

# WWL 2024: Persecution Dynamics / Tanzania

## Reporting period

1 October 2022 - 30 September 2023

## Position on the World Watch List

Tanzania: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2024	62	52
WWL 2023	63	53
WWL 2022	61	55
WWL 2021	58	57
WWL 2020	55	60

Despite no significant change in average pressure, there was a decrease in the violence score from 15.6 to 14.4 points in Tanzania, hence the overall score decreased by 1 point. Incidents of killings, church attacks, forced marriages, and abductions have been reported. In the coastal mainland areas, Christians have often faced grave issues like mob attacks. The situation in Zanzibar presents even tougher challenges due to strict governmental restrictions on Christian activities. Near the Mozambique border, the threat from Muslim extremist groups adds to Christian insecurity. Furthermore, the influence of conservative Islamic elements has led to the implementation of policies at both local and national levels, which directly or indirectly affect the Christian community.

## Persecution engines

Tanzania: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Strong
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Very weak

(Table continued below)

<b>Tanzania: Persecution engines</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Level of influence</b>
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
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.*

### **Islamic oppression (Strong), blended with Clan oppression (Medium)**

The once-active radical Islamic group UAMSHO has lost much of its momentum due to the arrest or departure of its leaders. However, the ideology it spread remains entrenched and continues to pose problems for Christians and the government. Though there have been no recent violent acts intended to bring the region under strict Islamic control, non-violent acts persist in illustrating this intention. A new threat is also emerging from the jihadist group operating in neighboring Mozambique, adding to the existing tensions.

### **Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)**

Under the fifth administration led by President Magufuli, churches in Tanzania have found themselves under increasing scrutiny from state authorities. Church leaders, who were once free to openly criticize social injustices and government actions, now find themselves subjected to resistance and harassment. Despite the change in leadership in 2021, there has been no significant shift away from these authoritarian practices. The nation continues to grapple with this legacy, and church activities remain monitored, stifling free speech and social justice advocacy.

## Drivers of persecution

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

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

### Drivers of Islamic oppression, blended with Clan oppression

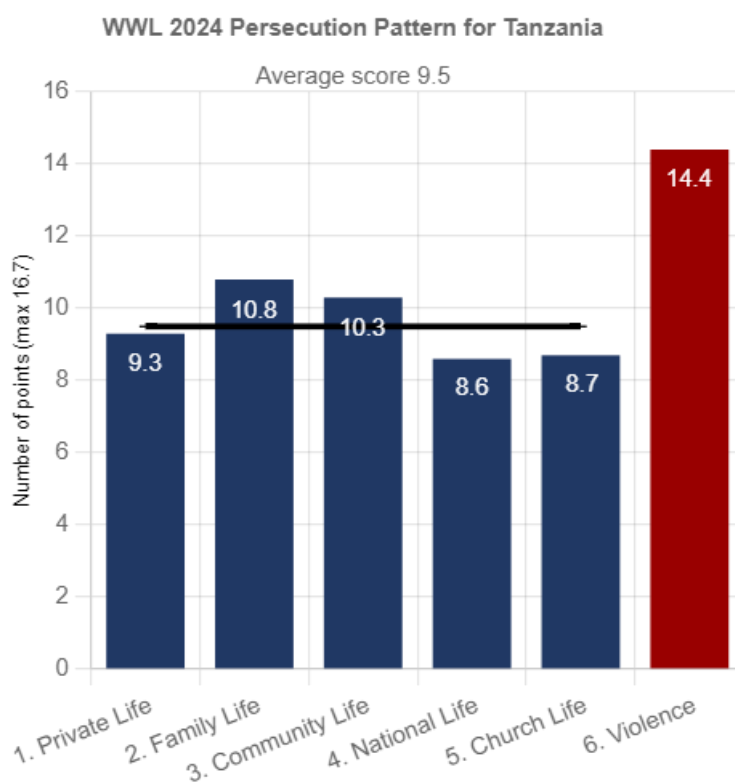
- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Strong):** The influence of Muslim sheiks and imams extends beyond the mosque, deeply affecting the social fabric. Apart from delivering incendiary sermons that birthed groups like UAMSHO, they also wield significant cultural power. For instance, during Ramadan, they enforce a de facto public eating ban, affecting both Muslims and non-Muslims. They also propagate strict dress codes, leading to societal shaming of individuals who defy these norms.
- **Citizens (Strong):** Ordinary citizens, particularly in Zanzibar and the coastal regions, play a hands-on role in persecution. This is manifested through forms of bullying, social discrimination, and stigmatization against Christians. Moreover, there is a noticeable preference for Islamic culture in public spaces, shown by the prevalence of Arabic poetry on public transportation, contrasting sharply with the absence of Christian music.
- **Violent religious group (Medium):** A relatively new but significant threat is emerging from jihadist groups operating in neighboring Mozambique. Known by various names, these groups have executed cross-border raids into Tanzania, fostering an environment of fear and trepidation among the Christian community.

- **Family (Strong):** For converts from Islam to Christianity, family-based persecution is often the first and most painful form of discrimination they experience. Islamic families have been known to sever ties or even inflict punishment on family members who convert, adding a layer of personal agony to the societal prejudice they already face.

#### Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** The government, first under President Magufuli and continuing under his successors, has displayed authoritarian tendencies. There is an active intimidation campaign against those who critique the government, including religious figures. Church leaders who are vocal about their concerns risk punitive measures such as de-registration of their religious institutions. The situation has not notably improved under the current administration, sustaining a state of precariousness around religious freedoms.

### The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2024 Persecution pattern for Tanzania shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Tanzania is high at 9.5 points, similar to WWL 2023.
- The *Family sphere* score is the highest (10.8 points), followed by the *Community sphere* with a score of 10.3 points. This is an indication that converts from Islam face pressure from both family and community members when they try to live according to their Christian values and faith.
- The score for violence is extremely high at 14.4 points, down from 15.6 points in WWL 2023.

## 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 2024 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 1.8: It has been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those other than immediate family (extended family, others). (3.25 points)**

Discussing Christian faith beyond immediate family poses a significant risk for Christians, particularly in regions dominated by a Muslim population, where accusations of conversion attempts can lead to perilous consequences.

**Block 1.7: It has been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with immediate family members. (2.75 points)**

It can be especially risky for converts to speak about their faith with immediate family members. This can lead to ostracism or even more severe repercussions. This issue is particularly prominent in areas where Islam has a strong conservative presence.

**Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (2.75 points)**

This is the case in certain regions. For instance, in Zanzibar, Christians have historically struggled to hold meetings safely due to fears of attack. This lingering apprehension is rooted in the experience of past incidents. Churches and Christian gatherings are often closely monitored by community members and youth.

**Block 1.1: Conversion has been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another. (2.50 points)**

In areas where conservative Islamic views prevail, converting to Christianity can lead to social ostracism, expulsion from the community, or even physical harm. Family members of converts might disown them or subject them to significant pressure to renounce their new faith. This is particularly evident in areas where religious identity is deeply intertwined with cultural and community norms.

### Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

**Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (3.25 points)**

In communities where Islam is the predominant religion, children of Christians are required to attend Islamic studies or participate in Islamic events, which can be challenging for them and their families who wish to raise their children in the Christian faith.



**Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (3.00 points)**

Parents in Zanzibar, particularly Christians, have encountered obstacles in raising their children according to their faith, as there are mandates for teaching Arabic and Islamic studies in public schools. The requirement for all students, including Christians, to take exams in Arabic and Islam as a graduation requirement emphasizes the imposition of Islamic teachings.

**Block 2.6: Christian couples have been hindered in adopting children or serving as foster parents because of their faith. (2.75 points)**

The Adoption of Children Act, with its consideration of the religious affiliation of the applicant in the consent process, suggests potential discriminatory practices, impacting Christians in regions where Muslims have majority influence.

**Block 2.9: Children of Christians have been harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' faith. (2.75 points)**

Children of Christians in Zanzibar, especially in schools with a Muslim-majority student body, regularly experience bullying and discrimination due to their or their parents' Christian beliefs. The prevalent hostility extends to teachers who are encouraged to subject Christian students to harsh discipline and persistent rebuke of their faith.

## Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

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

Christians, especially in areas like Zanzibar, frequently face harassment, threats, and obstruction; these challenges extend to various aspects of life, from social interactions to participating in community events. The strict restrictions imposed by the government of Zanzibar on Christian practices further exacerbate these difficulties, making it risky for Christians to fully express their faith or engage openly in religious activities.

**Block 3.11: Christians have been hindered in the operation of their businesses for faith-related reasons (e.g. access to loans, subsidies, government contracts, client boycotts). (3.25 points)**

Christians in certain regions have encountered significant faith-related barriers in operating their businesses. Discrimination against them can emerge from both governmental and private sectors, affecting crucial aspects of business operation. Christians find it more difficult to access loans, subsidies, and government contracts, as these processes can be influenced by religious biases. Additionally, they face client boycotts, where customers choose not to patronize their businesses solely based on the owners' religious affiliation. These challenges are not just isolated incidents but part of a broader systemic issue.

**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.). (3.00 points)**

Christians, particularly in places like Zanzibar, are subjected to close monitoring by their local communities. These invasive actions are not only a violation of their privacy but also a clear indication of the systemic challenges they encounter in practicing their faith.

**Block 3.10: Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

In regions like Zanzibar and along the coast where Muslims are the majority, Christians commonly encounter discrimination in both public and private sector employment because of their faith. This issue is underscored by consistent reports pointing to instances where Christians have been disadvantaged or excluded from job opportunities.

## Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

**Block 4.3: Christians have been forced by law or in practice to act against their conscience, e.g. regarding military service or in certain professions. (3.25 points)**

In Tanzania, particularly in coastal regions and Zanzibar, Christians face numerous challenges that conflict with their conscience. Specifically, those employed in government offices are often put in compromising situations where they are forced to sign documents that they know are false or linked to corruption.

**Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

In coastal areas and Zanzibar, Christians often experience discrimination when dealing with authorities. These interactions are frequently colored by the religious biases of the officials, leading to unequal treatment based on faith. The discrimination can manifest in various ways, from reduced access to services and support to unfair treatment in legal or bureaucratic processes.

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

Christians have faced hindrances in expressing their views or opinions in public, especially in political discussions. Church leaders have been warned against engaging in such discourse within their churches. This curtailment of freedom of expression underscores the challenges faced by Christians in openly sharing their faith-based views and values in public spaces.

**Block 4.9: Christian civil society organizations or political parties have been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions. (3.00 points)**

Christian civil society organizations in the country operate under heavy monitoring and face government restrictions on their activities. As a result, they are often confined to providing only certain types of services.

## Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

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

Securing registration or legal status for churches has become increasingly difficult due to cumbersome government requirements. These requirements appear to be specifically designed to discourage and hinder the registration of churches, particularly those that are newer and more vocal.

### **Block 5.4: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities inside their place of worship. (3.25 points)**

In coastal regions and Zanzibar, Christian congregations face significant external challenges. Local mobs, often incited by non-Christian religious leaders, actively create a hostile environment, deterring Christians from engaging in activities within their church compounds. This aggression undermines their sense of security and impinges upon their religious freedoms. Additionally, churches that vocalize against corruption and social injustices face government interference. Officials infiltrate these congregations, not just for surveillance but to instill discomfort and fear, serving as a form of intimidation and control.

### **Block 5.7: Churches have been hindered from openly integrating converts. (3.25 points)**

In areas such as Zanzibar and along the coast, churches face significant hindrances in openly integrating converts, a challenge that has persisted for many years. The process of accepting and integrating converts into church communities in these regions can lead to serious consequences both for the church and converts involved.

### **Block 5.20: It has been risky for churches or Christian organizations to speak out against instigators of persecution. (3.25 points)**

Speaking out against persecution in Tanzania can be unsafe and may lead to further serious hostility. Often, the persecutors are either government officials or individuals supported by the government. As a result, churches and Christian organizations face significant risks in openly addressing specific acts of persecution, as doing so can exacerbate their vulnerability and lead to intensified targeted actions against them.

## 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 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. 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 WWL chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

Tanzania: Violence scores per Block 6 question in questionnaire	WWL 2024	WWL 2023
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	10 *	10 *
6.2 How many churches or public Christian properties (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	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)?	0	10
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	10 *	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)?	10 *	23
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?	10 *	16
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?	10 *	16
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	10 *	15
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

## 5 Year trends

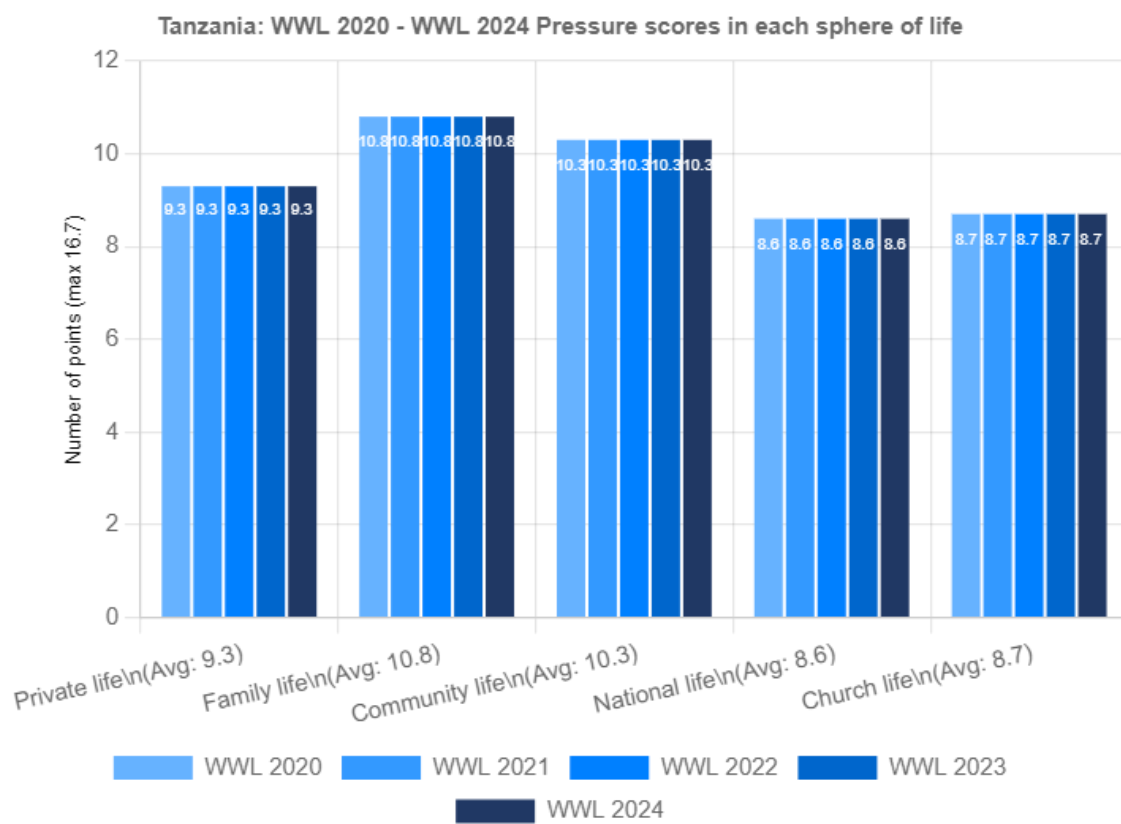
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

### 5 Year trends: Average pressure

The table below shows that the average pressure on Christians is high and has stabilized at a score of 9.5 points.

Tanzania: WWL 2020 - WWL 2024	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2024	9.5
2023	9.5
2022	9.5
2021	9.5
2020	9.5

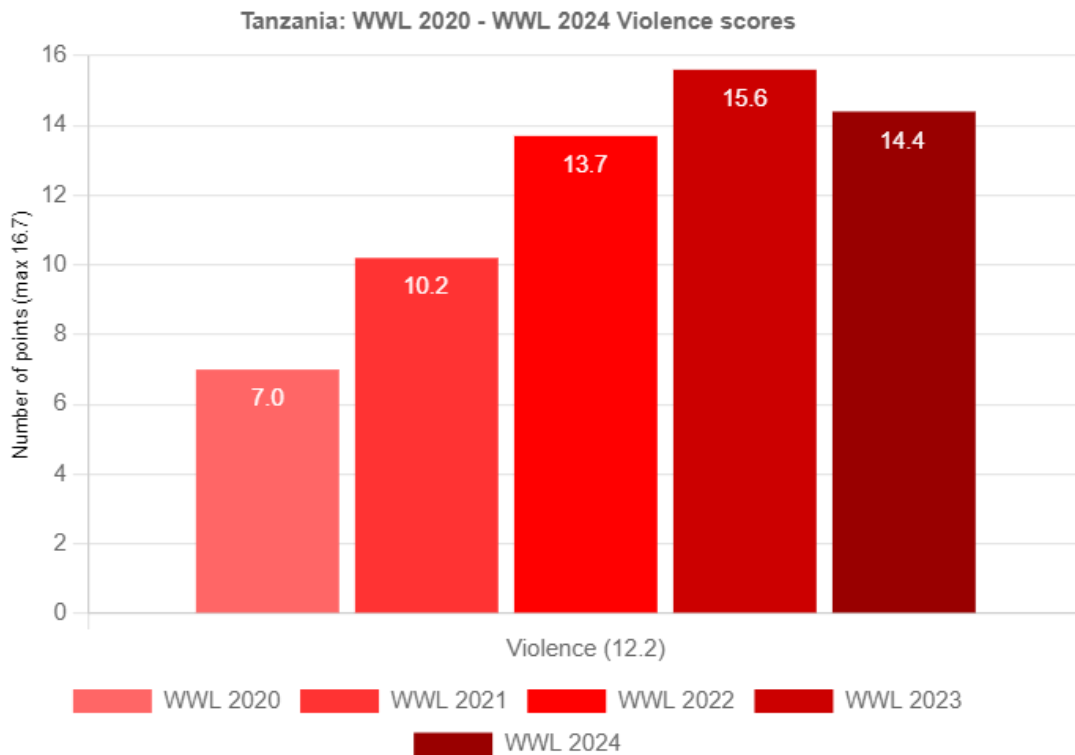
### 5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



The graph above shows that all *spheres of life* have stabilized in score from WWL 2020 onwards. The *Family* and *Community spheres* scored highest each reporting period (10.8 and 10.3 points on average respectively), which is an indication that Christians in some places face pressure to live their family life according to their Christian values and struggle in their communities to live as an equal citizen. The *National sphere* scored lowest with 8.6 points.

### 5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

The graph below shows that the violence against Christians steadily increased since WWL 2020, reaching the extreme level of 15.6 points in WWL 2023; there was a slight decrease in WWL 2024, but the level of violence remained extreme, scoring 14.4 points.



## Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions; Discrimination/harassment via education
Political and Legal	Denied access to social community/networks; Denied custody of children; Forced divorce; Forced marriage; Travel bans/restrictions on movement
Security	Abduction; Incarceration by family (house arrest); Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Enforced religious dress code; Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

Christian women in Tanzania face hostility both through subtle and violent means. In past years, this has included being denied access to communal resources such as community wells, being pressured to dress according to an Islamic dress code, and being verbally harassed.

Tanzania experiences significantly high rates of gender-based violence, driven by social norms and exacerbated by high rates of early marriage and childbirth, and low levels of women’s economic independence and education. 40% of all women aged between 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence, and almost 30% of girls experience sexual violence before the

age of 18 ([World Bank, 5 April 2022](#)). While there has been increasing attention to the issue of gender-based violence (GBV) in Tanzania, research shows that efforts are lagging due to a lack of oversight, weak institutional capacity and limited infrastructure. Within this context of impunity, low-levels of reporting and a normalization of GBV, Christian women are often subject to persecution via sexual assault and sexual violence. For example, a country expert explained that in some regions “women whose husbands have passed away are compelled to have affairs with another appointed person, as a means of what they call 'purification' from an omen of death of her husband”. Christian women can be coerced into such practices against their beliefs.

Women who have been subject to sexual violence are often afraid to speak out as the community then isolates them or they are subjected to social stigma, branded as prostitutes. In some cases, men may target single women, almost as though they want to punish them for not adhering to the norms of society by getting married. However, married women are also being targeted, with women as old as 70 also being attacked. Targeted attacks of sexual violence, including gang rape and so-called *Teleza* attacks – when the rapist covers himself in oil - are centered around a need to control women. In some locations, this affects Christians more than others.

Additionally, Christian women are sometimes intentionally targeted (deceived) by Muslim men who pretend to be evangelical Christians, with the intent of coercing them to recant their Christian faith. Furthermore, there is coercion to accept negative cultural practices such as widow inheritance in Mwanza, female genital mutilation, polygamous unions and early child marriages among the Maasai. Christian maids working for Muslims are required to wear the ‘Baibui’ (long black gowns) while working or risk losing their jobs. A country expert reported that Christian businesses are also boycotted once it is noticed that the vendors, especially women, are not dressed in accordance with Islamic regulations.

Female converts to Christianity face the most intense persecution. They continue to face the prospect of forced marriage, forced divorce, expulsion from their homes and isolation from their families, denial of their inheritance and custody rights. Young female converts in particular are likely to be confined at home with severe restraints on their movement.

Due to such religious persecution, Christian Tanzanian women are often demoralized, traumatized and consequently unable to work effectively. This is reported to have a negative economic impact on the wider Tanzanian Church, as many women are unable to contribute, in part due to limited access to education.



## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Political and Legal	-
Security	Forced out of home – expulsion; Violence – physical
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

Christian men in Tanzania have in the past encountered discrimination and segregation in the workplace, particularly in Muslim companies, although this has not been reported in the WWL 2024 reporting period. Often, they are forced to observe prayers during official prayer times and are commonly targeted by Muslims who wish to convert them. “Persecution for men is mostly economic, in the form of being kicked out of their jobs, physical attacks and denied inheritance,” a country expert stated.

While women also face persecution in the workplace, as the heads of the household, the impact on men is far reaching. Such faith-based challenges at work have placed a long-term economic burden on Christian men, as well as their families for whom they are the primary provider. The wider Tanzanian Church is further impacted, as without funds it struggles economically. It is also weakened in terms of attendance, as many men struggle to attend due to working hours.

Christian converts are affected by cultural and ethnic factors, particularly if from tribal backgrounds. If a Maasai warrior converts to Christianity, for example, and changes his hair from the traditional style, the tribal leaders (whose role is to preserve the culture of the tribe) often regard this act as a form of betrayal. Punishment may include physical harm with traditional weapons such as spears and arrows. Similarly, converts from a Muslim background will face harsh treatment and reprisals. Upon conversion, financial support is usually withdrawn. One convert recently stopped attending church because of the death threats he was receiving from his family, and occasionally death can be a risk for Christian men. Many converts are forced to flee as a result of these difficulties.

## Persecution of other religious minorities

Besides Christians and Muslims, Tanzania’s demography includes Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahai and animists. There are currently no reports about the mistreatment or persecution of these groups.

## Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

### Islamic oppression, blended with Clan oppression

Christians in Tanzania face an increasingly precarious situation, especially in coastal areas and Zanzibar. The presence of Islamic militants from neighboring Mozambique has heightened concerns, and there is the possibility that these insurgents may find refuge in Tanzania due to military operations against them in Mozambique. Additionally, reports indicate that cells of al-Shabaab are active in the country, adding another layer of threat. As international forces focus on Mozambique, there is a risk that these elements may see Tanzania as a softer target. Considering the regional dynamics and the presence of jihadist groups, *Islamic oppression* is likely to remain a major form of persecution for Christians in the foreseeable future, barring a dramatic change in regional politics.

### Dictatorial paranoia

While the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party continues to tighten its grip on power, often at the cost of human rights and millions of dollars, Christians find themselves in a difficult position. In this context, President Hassan, who took office in 2021, has shown a willingness to shift away from the policies of her predecessor, President Magufuli. Church leaders have reported a somewhat improved relationship with the government in recent months. However, the reality is that a significant distance remains to be covered. Current policies and practices that stifle civil freedoms continue to be in place. Despite the initial optimism surrounding the change in leadership, the environment for civil society and the Church remains restricted, indicating that there is a long road ahead for substantive change.

## External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: (World Bank, 5 April 2022). - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/publication/tanzania-can-do-more-to-protect-women-and-girls-by-urgently-addressing-gaps-in-efforts-to-combat-gender-based-violence>

## Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on the Research & Reports pages of the Open Doors website:

- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/>.

As in earlier years, these are also available on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom):

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Tanzania>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>.