
World Watch Research

Azerbaijan: Persecution Dynamics

January 2025



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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World Watch List 2025 – Top 50

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	96	98	96	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.7	11.1	94	93	92	91	92
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.6	94	89	89	88	87
4	Libya	16.0	16.2	15.9	16.2	16.4	10.6	91	91	88	91	92
5	Sudan	14.1	14.2	15.5	14.9	15.3	16.1	90	87	83	79	79
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.9	12.2	89	89	89	88	88
7	Nigeria	13.5	13.9	14.6	14.9	14.5	16.7	88	88	88	87	85
8	Pakistan	13.6	13.9	15.0	15.0	12.9	16.7	87	87	86	87	88
9	Iran	15.0	14.6	13.5	15.9	16.5	10.9	86	86	86	85	86
10	Afghanistan	15.6	15.9	15.9	16.4	16.7	5.0	85	84	84	98	94
11	India	12.2	12.9	13.3	14.9	13.9	16.5	84	83	82	82	83
12	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.8	15.8	16.6	3.3	81	81	80	81	78
13	Myanmar	12.6	11.1	13.5	14.1	12.9	16.5	81	79	80	79	74
14	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	13.0	15.2	15.6	80	79	76	70	67
15	China	13.2	10.1	12.8	14.6	16.1	11.1	78	78	77	76	74
16	Maldives	15.6	15.3	13.7	15.8	16.5	0.7	78	78	77	77	77
17	Iraq	14.2	14.4	14.3	14.8	13.9	6.1	78	79	76	78	82
18	Syria	13.5	14.4	13.9	14.4	14.3	7.0	78	81	80	78	81
19	Algeria	14.7	14.3	11.5	14.7	16.0	6.3	77	79	73	71	70
20	Burkina Faso	11.7	9.7	13.2	11.5	14.0	15.6	76	75	71	68	67
21	Morocco	13.2	13.8	11.6	12.9	14.3	8.3	74	71	69	69	67
22	Laos	11.8	10.7	13.5	14.1	13.9	9.8	74	75	68	69	71
23	Mauritania	14.6	14.2	13.8	14.2	14.2	2.8	74	72	72	70	71
24	Bangladesh	12.4	10.6	12.7	11.3	10.4	16.1	74	71	69	68	67
25	Uzbekistan	14.6	12.7	13.5	12.4	15.5	4.4	73	71	71	71	71
26	Cuba	13.2	8.5	13.9	13.3	15.1	9.1	73	73	70	66	62
27	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	14.0	15.6	72	70	70	68	66
28	Niger	9.4	9.6	14.5	7.7	14.6	15.7	72	70	70	68	62

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
29	Turkmenistan	14.3	12.3	13.6	13.9	15.3	1.5	71	70	70	69	70
30	Nicaragua	12.4	7.6	13.7	13.3	14.1	9.6	71	70	65	56	51
31	Mexico	11.7	9.0	12.5	11.8	11.0	14.6	71	68	67	65	64
32	Oman	14.5	14.1	10.9	13.8	14.1	3.0	70	69	65	66	63
33	Ethiopia	9.9	9.7	12.6	10.4	12.1	15.6	70	69	66	66	65
34	Tunisia	12.4	13.2	10.1	12.6	13.8	8.1	70	69	67	66	67
35	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	10.8	14.5	16.1	70	67	67	66	64
36	Bhutan	13.2	13.2	12.3	14.1	14.2	2.2	69	68	66	67	64
37	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.9	68	68	68	65	63
38	Kazakhstan	13.3	11.6	12.2	12.8	14.2	4.3	68	65	65	64	64
39	Tajikistan	14.1	12.7	12.7	13.2	13.7	1.9	68	66	66	65	66
40	Egypt	12.7	13.7	12.1	12.4	10.9	6.3	68	68	68	71	75
41	Qatar	14.2	14.2	10.5	13.2	14.4	0.7	67	67	68	74	67
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	2.6	67	66	66	63	62
43	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	8.4	13.1	16.1	67	66	65	65	64
44	Vietnam	10.8	9.5	12.2	14.1	14.1	5.9	67	68	70	71	72
45	Turkey	13.0	11.7	11.7	13.2	11.5	5.4	67	64	66	65	69
46	Colombia	11.0	7.9	12.7	11.5	10.5	12.6	66	68	71	68	67
47	Kyrgyzstan	13.5	10.3	11.7	11.4	12.4	6.9	66	59	59	58	58
48	Brunei	14.8	14.8	10.8	10.8	14.0	0.6	66	66	65	64	64
49	Chad	11.0	8.2	10.2	9.9	10.3	15.9	65	61	58	55	53
50	Jordan	12.9	14.3	10.4	12.2	12.8	2.4	65	65	65	66	64

World Watch List 2025 – Ranks 51-78

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
51	Malaysia	12.8	13.7	11.7	12.4	11.2	3.0	65	64	66	63	63
52	Azerbaijan	13.3	10.2	9.6	12.2	13.7	5.6	65	60	59	60	56
53	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.9	64	63	64	63	62
54	Nepal	12.2	10.6	9.5	12.6	12.3	5.9	63	62	61	64	66
55	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.4	63	62	63	61	58
56	Russian Federation	12.7	7.9	10.7	13.1	14.1	4.4	63	58	57	56	57
57	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.1	1.7	61	61	60	59	56
58	Kuwait	13.1	13.6	9.4	12.0	12.2	0.9	61	61	64	64	63
59	Indonesia	10.9	11.9	10.9	11.6	10.2	5.7	61	66	68	68	63
60	UAE	13.3	13.4	9.5	11.3	12.8	0.6	61	61	62	62	62
61	Sri Lanka	12.7	8.7	11.5	11.5	8.5	7.6	60	60	57	63	62
62	Palestinian Territories	13.1	13.3	10.3	10.7	12.1	0.2	60	60	60	59	58
63	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	14.6	59	57	55	52	48
64	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	12.1	9.4	58	58	57	50	42
65	Honduras	7.9	4.7	11.7	7.3	9.9	13.1	55	55	53	48	46
66	Togo	9.2	6.7	10.4	7.1	11.5	9.3	54	52	49	44	43
67	Bahrain	12.0	13.2	8.6	11.3	8.5	0.6	54	55	55	57	56
68	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	8.9	54	52	48	43	47
69	Ukraine	6.8	5.0	7.8	12.5	13.5	7.2	53	44	37	37	34
70	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	8.3	53	52	52	51	46
71	Venezuela	6.3	4.4	11.1	10.0	10.8	9.6	52	53	56	51	39
72	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	8.8	16.1	52	52	51	48	47
73	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	9.6	51	44	44	42	42
74	Lebanon	11.5	10.1	7.0	6.2	6.7	7.2	49	48	40	35	34
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	4.4	48	47	44	44	43
76	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	8.1	15.6	47	46	46	43	43

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2025	Total Score WWL 2024	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021
77	Belarus	9.9	3.7	5.0	10.8	14.1	3.1	47	46	43	33	30
78	Philippines	9.2	6.6	6.6	6.1	5.7	8.5	43	40	32	34	26

Copyright, sources and definitions

World Watch Research has divided up the previously named Full Country Dossier into two separate documents:

- [Background country information](#) (published annually in summer)
- Persecution dynamics (published annually in January/February).

These documents are the property of World Watch Research (WWR), the research department of Open Doors International. They include data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and 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 end of each document under the heading “External links”. These documents may be used and distributed free of charge, but please always acknowledge the source as: © Open Doors International.

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/>.

Reporting period

The WWL 2025 reporting period was 1 October 2023 - 30 September 2024.

Brief country details

Azerbaijan: Population (UN estimate for 2024)	Christians	Chr%
10,463,000	253,000	2.4

Zurlo G A and Johnson T M, eds., World Christian Database, Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed May 2024

Azerbaijan: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	253,000	2.4
Muslim	10,069,000	96.2
Hindu	340	0.0
Buddhist	0	0.0
Ethnic religionist	0	0.0
Jewish	9,500	0.1
Bahai	2,100	0.0
Atheist	5,800	0.1
Agnostic	121,000	1.2
Other	1,900	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Zurlo G A and Johnson T M, eds., World Christian Database, Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed May 2024

Map of country



Concerning Nagorno-Karabakh: According to: [Freedom House's country profile](#) (accessed 23 February 2024): "The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, which also calls itself the Republic of Artsakh, has enjoyed *de facto* independence from Azerbaijan since a 1994 cease-fire agreement that ended roughly two years of open warfare, though its independence is not recognized by any UN member states. The territory's population is mostly ethnic Armenians, and given its geographic and diplomatic isolation, it has been dependent on close political and economic ties with Armenia. However, a third of Nagorno-Karabakh and some adjacent land came under Azerbaijani control in 2020 under a cease-fire agreement that ended a weeks-long conflict that year." As reported by HRW 2024 Azerbaijan country chapter: On 19 September 2023, "Azerbaijan launched a military operation to regain full control over Nagorno-Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh forces surrendered after one day of fighting. More than 100,000 ethnic Armenians—nearly the entire Armenian population of the area—fled to Armenia."

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Azerbaijan: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials, Political parties, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
Islamic oppression	One's own (extended) family, Government officials, Ethnic group leaders, Non-Christian religious leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
Clan oppression	One's own (extended) family, Government officials, Ethnic group leaders, Non-Christian religious leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
Ethno-religious hostility	Ethnic group leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs

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

Brief description of the persecution situation

The government of Azerbaijan monitors the activities of religious groups closely. Officially, the country is secular and religion is tolerated. However, the level of surveillance is so high that Christians in Azerbaijan do not know whom to trust anymore. Russian Orthodox churches experience the least problems from the government as they do not usually attempt to make contact with the Azerbaijani population. It is the indigenous Christians with a Muslim background who are bearing the brunt of persecution both at the hands of the state and from family, friends and community. It needs to be borne in mind that Azerbaijani Christians have been under great pressure not to report on persecution.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- April 2024:** Caucasus Heritage Watch has released images that reveal the recent demolition of St. John the Baptist Church, a 19th century structure in Nagorno-Karabakh's Susa area, and the razing of a village known in Armenian as Karintak. The church and village, both with significant Armenian heritage, were under Azerbaijani control after Baku captured Susa from ethnic Armenian forces in November 2020. (Sources: [Christian Post, 28 April 2024](#) and [International Christian Concern, 23 May 2024](#))

- **July 2024:** Since September 2023 almost all Armenian Christians fled to Armenia. Azerbaijan took the opportunity to demolish many Christian churches, other religious buildings (e.g. monasteries), cemeteries etc. Many houses of Christians were also destroyed. (Sources: [Christian Post](#), 22 July 2024 and [Christianity Today](#), 28 October 2024). The number of destroyed monuments, churches, schools, and cemeteries in Nagorno-Karabakh is likely in the hundreds. (See also: [Caucasus Heritage Watch](#), accessed 20 January 2025).

According to US State Department ([IRFR 2023 Azerbaijan](#)):

- "Local human rights groups and detainees said the government continued to physically abuse, temporarily hold incommunicado, arrest, and imprison religious activists, and that many arrests and convictions of religious figures, including on drug possession charges, were politically motivated."

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians in Azerbaijan are not involuntarily isolated from other Christian communities and so have not been considered as a separate category for WWL analysis and scoring.

Historical Christian communities: These groups are not involved in evangelism among Azeris and can function without too much government interference. They will also be used to corroborate the regime claim that Azerbaijan is the "Land of Tolerance".

Converts to Christianity: Christian converts with a Muslim background bear the brunt of the persecution in Azerbaijan. Apart from restrictions from the state, they are under strong pressure from family, friends and community, which affects them more directly.

Non-traditional Christian communities: These groups are high on the government's agenda. They have been infiltrated by informers, and all their activities are constantly being monitored. Pastors and church leaders are required to report to the police regularly. Due to the repeated cycles of obligatory re-registration every 6-7 years, ever fewer congregations in this category exist.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

According to the US State Department ([IRFR 2023 Azerbaijan](#)): "Christians live mainly in Baku and other urban areas."

There are no hotspots for the persecution of Christians in Azerbaijan, but pressure from the Muslim environment on converts is more intense outside the major cities. After the Karabakh conflict in the 1990s, many Christians in Azerbaijan (who were ethnic Armenians) left the country or went to take up residency in the break-away republic. The new fighting that erupted at the end of September 2020 over Karabakh had severe consequences for Christians in the region as shelling destroyed houses, official buildings and even a few churches. Hundreds of people were killed. After the September 2023 military operation, Azerbaijan took control over Karabakh and practically all ethnic Armenians (120,000) left the region.

Position on the World Watch List

Azerbaijan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	65	52
WWL 2024	60	59
WWL 2023	59	58
WWL 2022	60	56
WWL 2021	56	61

The WWL 2025 score (65 points) is five points higher than in WWL 2024, due almost completely to the sharp rise in violence against Christians, going up from 1.7 points in WWL 2024 to 5.6 points in WWL 2025. This increase was mainly caused by Azerbaijan taking full control over Karabakh and destroying public Christian buildings and cemeteries. *Islamic oppression* (blended with *Clan oppression*) dominates in the *Private and Family spheres of life*, while *Dictatorial paranoia* dominates in the *National and Church spheres of life*. Both engines 'meet' each other in the *Community sphere of life*. Muslim families, friends and villagers exert pressure on converts, while the government imposes many restrictions on church activities.

Persecution engines

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

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.

Dictatorial paranoia (Strong)

No religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. State agents are reported to have infiltrated all religious congregations. Pastors and other church leaders are regularly invited for conversations with the police. This has created an atmosphere of fear and no one knows who they can trust any longer. As a result, few dare to talk to foreigners and information about persecution is scarce. Restrictive legislation that requires registration has been imposed. From time to time all registered groups are required to apply for re-registration, a process in which ever fewer congregations manage to pass the hurdle. The level of oppression in Azerbaijan is so high that Azerbaijani Christians find it easier to evangelize in Iran than in their own country.

Islamic oppression (Medium), blended with Clan oppression (Medium) and Ethno-religious hostility (Medium)

According to society's standard attitude, an Azerbaijani has to be a Muslim. Christians are normally from other ethnic groups (Russians and Armenians). Christian converts from a Muslim background are particularly affected. If indigenous people convert to Christianity, they will experience pressure and occasionally physical violence from their families, friends and local community to force them to recant and return to their former faith (Islam). Some converts will be locked up for long periods and beaten. Local imams preach against them and they may eventually be expelled from their communities. As a result, converts from Islam will do their best to hide their new faith – they become so-called secret believers.

Drivers of persecution

Azerbaijan: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	MEDIUM	-	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	VERY WEAK	-	-	STRONG	-
Government officials	Medium	-	Very weak	Medium	Very weak	-	-	Strong	-
Ethnic group leaders	Medium	-	Medium	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Christian religious leaders	Medium	-	Weak	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Religious leaders of other churches	-	-	-	-	Very weak	-	-	-	-
Violent religious groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(table continues below)

Azerbaijan: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	MEDIUM	-	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	VERY WEAK	-	-	STRONG	-
Ideological pressure groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium	-	Medium	Medium	Very weak	-	-	Medium	-
One's own (extended) family	Strong	-	-	Strong	Weak	-	-	-	-
Political parties	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Strong	-
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Organized crime cartels or networks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.) and embassies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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

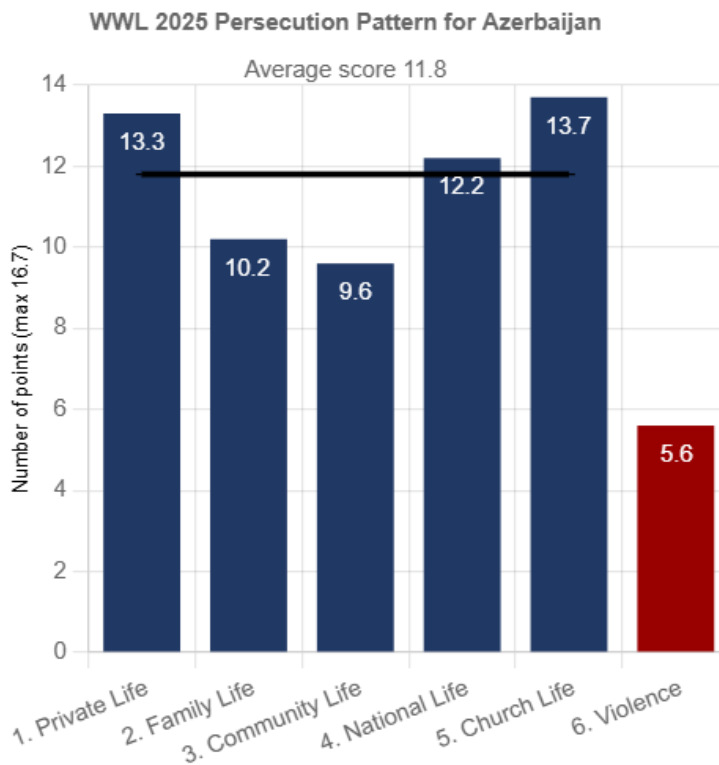
Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Strong):** At all levels, government officials are the strongest persecutors of Christians in Azerbaijan. They have infiltrated churches and police interrogate pastors and other church leaders regularly. They monitor religious activities, raid meetings and block the distribution of religious materials.
- **Political parties (Strong):** Few parties are allowed in Azerbaijan and opposition is constantly suppressed. The governing party under President Aliyev is a powerful element in suppressing religious and other forms of freedom in the country.
- **Normal citizens (Medium):** Especially at the local level, members of the community will monitor religious activities and report to the authorities.

Drivers of Islamic oppression, blended with Clan oppression and Ethno-religious hostility

- **Muslim family members (Strong):** A convert's Muslim family will exert high pressure since they regard conversion to Christianity as betrayal. This may lead to house arrest and beatings.
- **Government officials (Medium):** At the community level there is a link between government officials and Muslim pressure. Often, active Muslims and local officials know each other. This is why the pressure on converts is stronger at the community level than at the state level, where officials claim that they are secular.
- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Medium) and Ethnic group leaders:** Muslim leaders are also oppressed by the government and have limited freedom. Nevertheless, that does not stop them using their influence to oppose any conversion of Azerbaijanis to Christianity.
- **Ordinary citizens (Medium):** Islam is the traditional religion for ethnic Azerbaijanis. Ordinary citizens at the community level will exert high pressure on converts to return to Islam.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2025 Persecution pattern for Azerbaijan shows:

- The average pressure on Christians is at a very high level (11.8 points), very slightly higher than the WWL 2024 score of 11.7 points.
- The two spheres of life with the highest levels of pressure were again the *Church* and *Private spheres of life*. Pressure on Christians comes from two main sources: *Islamic oppression* (blended with *Clan oppression* and *Ethno-religious hostility*) in the *Private sphere of life* and *Dictatorial paranoia* in the *Church sphere of life*.
- The score for violence rose from 1.7 points in WWL 2024 to 5.6 points in WWL 2025. This was mainly caused by the redevelopment taking place in Karabakh after the Armenians left the region.

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 2025 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://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-documentation/>.

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (3.50 points)

For converts from Islam, the persecution comes from their family or local community when, for instance, Christian materials are discovered. Christian materials are considered as hard evidence for conversion. The government has a strict requirement that all religious literature (both imported and anything produced in the country) must be checked by the state and given permission for distribution - otherwise it is illegal and banned. The ROC does not seem to have any problems at this point.

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.). (3.50 points)

There are few opportunities for Christians to reveal their faith and activities in written form, except on Facebook and other similar social media platforms. Christians from registered churches in Azerbaijan - including indigenous Christians - openly share their faith, although the access to their pages would be restricted to a group of friends. However, Christians from non-registered churches do not use Facebook for such purposes. Converts have an additional problem in this respect as openly showing their new faith will draw negative reactions from their families, friends and the community.

Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (3.50 points)

Converts run the risk of drawing unwanted attention from their social environment. Protestants are always at risk of government harassment and disruption when meeting with other Christians, as it is considered an illegal activity not sanctioned by the government.

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)

Converts will avoid sharing their new faith with members of their local Islamic community to prevent negative reactions. Non-traditional Protestants can also quickly be accused of carrying out evangelism when they speak about their faith.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

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

Baptisms are regularly regarded as the final farewell to the faith of the fathers - the final sign of conversion. Family, friends and community will oppose this. Baptisms are regarded by the state with hostility as they are automatically connected to evangelism and conversion - two activities opposed by the state.

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

Christian children are often insulted for their faith and Muslim children are usually kept from communication with them. Children of converts are seen as outsiders and may experience harassment from other children.

Block 2.5: Burials of Christians have been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites (3.25 points)

The problem of burial places is frequent in Azerbaijan. In rural areas, where generations of families are buried on the same graveyard, Christian converts could be deprived of the place to bury their family members since the majority of graves belong to Islamic families. At the same time, Azerbaijan is a secular country (by law) and any religious discrimination could potentially face legal objections. Therefore, the unwillingness to bury the deceased of Christian converts would be explained by other reasons, for example by unavailability or shortage of space for graves.

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (3.25 points)

Officially, Azerbaijan is a secular country. It will not impose a specific religious teaching. The only place for parents to provide Christian teaching is in church and at home. This can mostly take place without problem, although Christians from non-registered churches may encounter some difficulties. For converts from Islam the situation is very different: The extended family will often try to take the children of converts away and raise them according to Islamic principles. This is also a problem when one of the parents is not a Christian.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

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.). (3.50 points)

This is one of the strongest forms of persecution in the country as the state closely monitors non-Orthodox Christians. People from the local community also report on the activities of Christians to the authorities. Converts are, of course, also monitored by the family and surrounding community.

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)

Threats are very common. Converts are threatened by family, friends and community (including local imams), and the state constantly threatens members of unregistered churches.

Block 3.10: Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)

At the community level, converts from Islam face this type of discrimination in particular and their employment opportunities can be seriously impacted, while other non-Orthodox Christians reportedly

struggle in terms of economic opportunities. Societal factors are mostly to blame for pressure in the private sector. For jobs in the public sector, it is often the state that does not allow known Christians to take up posts.

Block 3.12: Christians have been fined for faith-related reasons (e.g. jizya tax, community tax, protection money). (3.25 points)

This is a common occurrence with regard to practically all churches, with the exception of the Russian Orthodox Church. This is the preferred method of persecution the authorities use to crack down on these churches, prior to escalating to more severe forms of punishment (raids, imprisonments, closure of churches).

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. (4.00 points)

Due to its secular principles, the state will not tolerate the formation of any such Christian organization. Also, the majority of the population is Muslim, so allowing Christian organizations would create societal unrest. Muslims will quickly regard Christian organizations as an attempt to convert people to Christianity and will block this with all means.

Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.75 points)

Azerbaijan is a secular state. The government perceives faith-based opinions expressed in public by Christians as potentially destabilizing. It will block this. From the Muslim perspective, Christianity is primarily seen as being linked to their arch-enemy Armenia. Apart from this, Muslims consider Christian preaching and evangelism in public undesirable and will obstruct this with all means.

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. (3.50 points)

Human rights activists have continued to criticize the government for not offering any form of alternative service for conscientious objectors refusing compulsory military service.

Block 4.16: International monitoring has been hindered when Christians had to stand trial. (3.50 points)

Azerbaijan is doing its best to create a positive image abroad; it is working hard to impress OSCE, EU and other international organizations. When a negative report about their country is published, the Azeri regime will do its best to attack this. They will claim that international monitoring is possible, but at the same time ensure that much passes unnoticed.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.8: Christian preaching, teaching materials and/or published materials were monitored. (3.75 points)

All materials must be cleared by the committee for religious affairs first. And only registered groups can have religious materials. Muslims will also keep an eye on this and report to the authorities when necessary.

Block 5.14: Openly selling or distributing Bibles and other Christian materials has been hindered. (3.75 points)

All religious materials are closely watched by the state. Nothing may be used unless special permission has been given. Distribution can be done on a small scale inside a few registered churches.

Block 5.1: Activities of churches have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.50 points)

Religious activities are keenly monitored by the strictly secular authorities. Raids are reported regularly, particularly for Jehovah's Witnesses and evangelical groups. Activities of unregistered groups can also be hindered and/or obstructed. Physical violence is used on a very limited scale.

Block 5.13: Churches have been hindered in importing Christian materials from abroad. (3.50 points)

Registration is required to produce, import, export, or distribute religious material; but state permission to actually do this is hardly ever granted.

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 WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

Azerbaijan: Violence scores per Block 6 question in questionnaire	WWL 2025	WWL 2024
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	0	0
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?	7	3
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
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	0
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	0	0
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	0	0
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?	100 *	0

(table continues below)

Azerbaijan: Violence scores per Block 6 question in questionnaire	WWL 2025	WWL 2024
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 *	0
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	10000 *	0

In the WWL 2025 reporting period:

- **Churches and public Christian properties damaged:** At least 7 Christian buildings were deliberately damaged/destroyed, including (in Nagorno Karabakh) two schools, St. John the Baptist church in Shishi, St. Hambardzum church in Berdzor and a cross memorial in Stepanakert. As revealed by satellite images, the scale of destruction is evidently much wider, and the real number of destroyed monuments, churches, schools and cemeteries is likely in the hundreds.
- **Christian houses or properties damaged:** Hundreds of houses and other properties of Christians were damaged or destroyed during the Azerbaijani attack on Karabakh.
- **Christian businesses or shops damaged:** Dozens of shops and businesses of Christians were damaged or destroyed during the Azerbaijani attack on Karabakh.
- **Christians forced to leave the country:** Tens of thousands of Armenians Christians fled Karabakh after Azerbaijan took over control.

5 Year trends

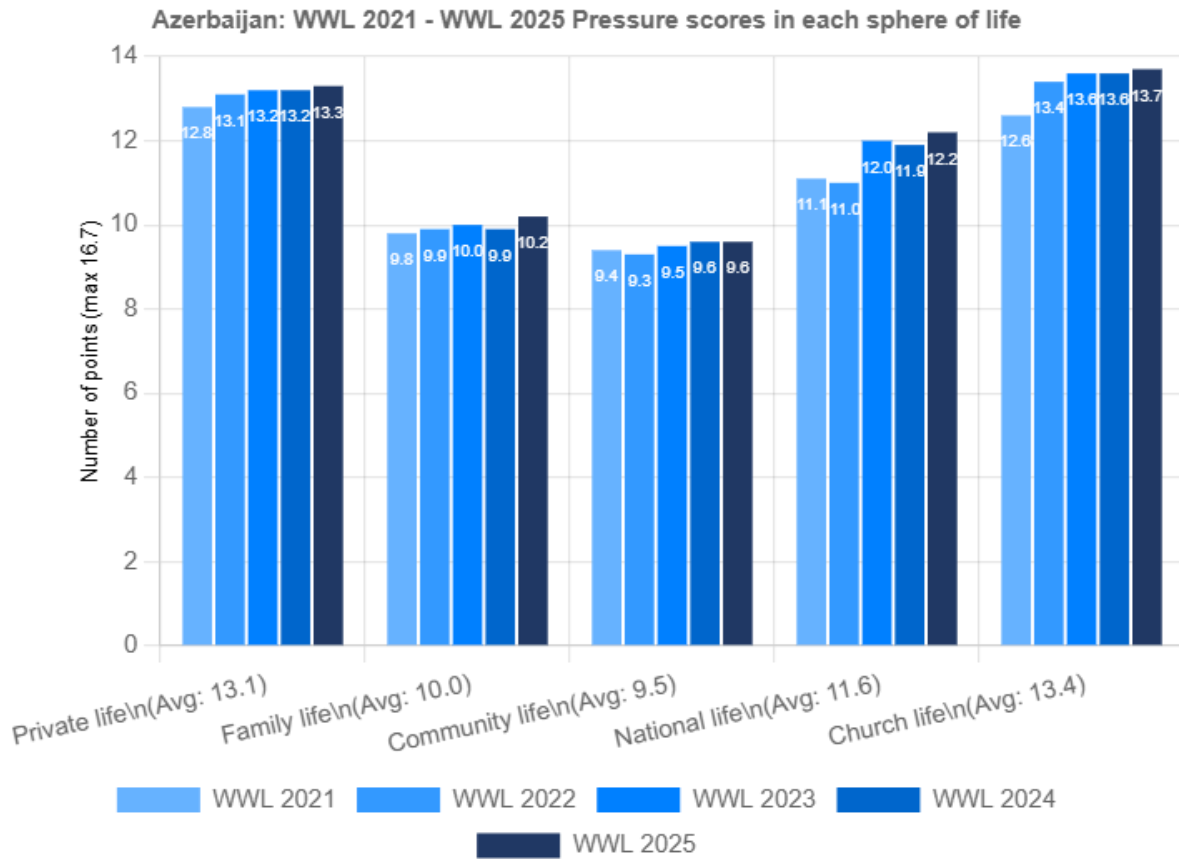
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

5 Year trends: Average pressure

Azerbaijan: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	11.8
2024	11.7
2023	11.7
2022	11.3
2021	11.1

The table above shows that the level of average pressure has been very high over the five most recent reporting periods. In the WWL 2023-2025 period, the score has more or less stabilized at 11.7 - 11.8 points.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



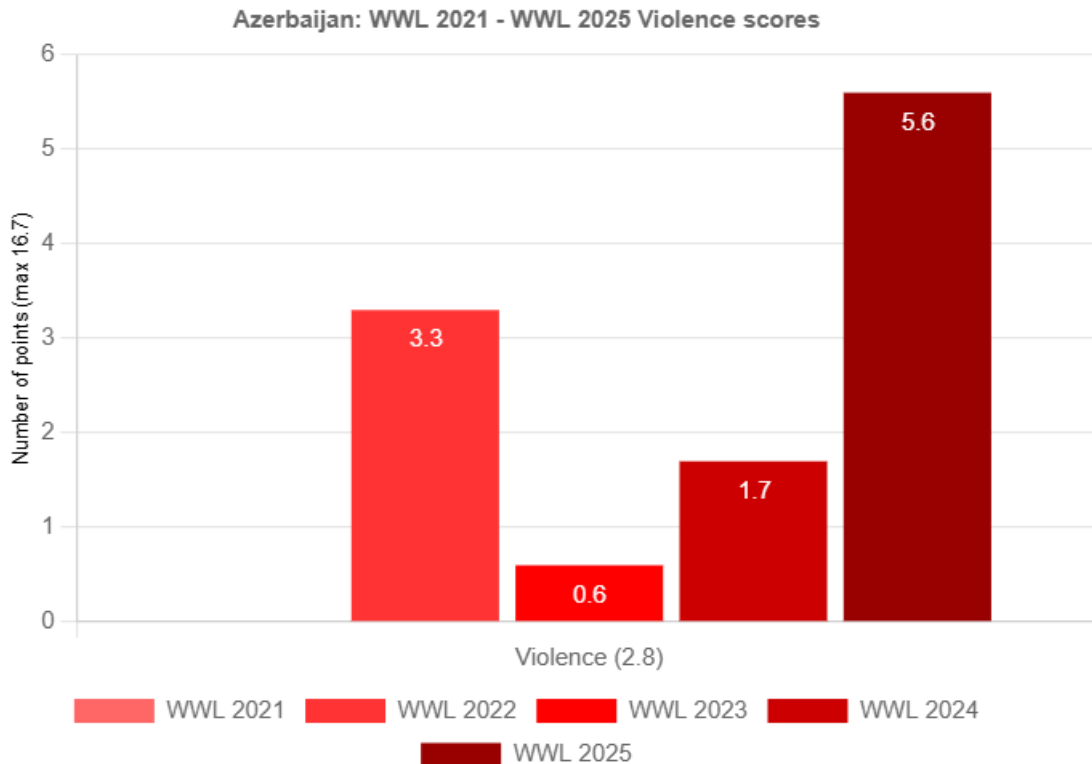
The table above shows that there has been some stability in the five spheres of life. Pressure has remained highest in two spheres of life in particular: the *Private* and *Church spheres of life*. This reflects the influence of the two main Persecution engines.

- **Pressure in Private sphere of life** over the past five years has always been very high - it has never been lower than 12.8 points. Until WWL 2022, the score of *Private sphere of life* was the highest scoring sphere of life in Azerbaijan, indicating high pressure especially on converts. (Since WWL 2022 this 'privilege' went to the *Church sphere of life*.) In WWL 2025 the score for the *Private sphere of life* went up to 13.3 points, just 0.1 point higher than in WWL 2023 and 2024.
- **Pressure in Family sphere of life** has been fairly stable since WWL 2021 at a high level. Most affected are converts. The score for *Family sphere of life* has fluctuated from 9.9 points in WWL 2021 to 10.2 points in WWL 2025.
- **Pressure in Community sphere of life** has been very stable at a high level. Most affected are converts. The score of *Community sphere of life* in WWL 2025 (9.6 points) was the same as in WWL 2024.
- **Pressure in National sphere of life** has also been fairly constant, but at a very high level over the past five WWL reporting periods, showing that the government has not reduced its pressure on

Christians to any great degree. The score of *National sphere of life* in WWL 2025 (12.2 points) went up slightly from WWL 2024 (11.9 points).

- **Pressure in Church sphere of life** has had the highest score of all five spheres of life since WWL 2022, indicating the high level of state oppression on Christians. The score for WWL 2025 (13.7 points) is very slightly higher than that of WWL 2024 (13.6 points).

5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



The level of violence in Azerbaijan has varied somewhat over the five most recent WWL reporting periods. It was very low in WWL 2021 and 2023, a bit higher in WWL 2024 and markedly higher in WWL 2022 and 2025. As already indicated above, Azerbaijani Christians are under great pressure not to report on persecution. Nevertheless, in WWL 2025 the score for violence jumped to a country record high of 5.6 points. This was mainly due to the effects of the most recent Karabakh war. Following Azerbaijan’s [lightning offensive](#) and occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023, the ethnic Armenian enclave was officially dissolved on 1 January 2024. More than one hundred thousand people, almost all of Nagorno-Karabakh’s population, fled to Armenia in one week (Source: CFR, 20 March 2024) and Azerbaijan destroyed Armenian churches, buildings, homes and cemeteries.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Azerbaijan

Female Pressure Points

Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024

Abduction
Denied access to social community/networks
Forced marriage
Forced out of home/expulsion
Incarceration by family
Violence – physical
Violence – psychological
Violence – verbal

In Azerbaijan, family traditions and rules are very strict, and disobedience to senior family members is unacceptable. Patriarchal norms and discriminatory gender stereotypes remain prevalent and women are expected to remain within the home and prioritize domestic and familial duties ([UN News, 1 January 2022](#)). Within this context, women are not free to choose their own religion and will face persecution upon conversion to Christianity.

Christian converts (typically from a Muslim background) are therefore most vulnerable to persecution - both as Christians and as women who dare to challenge the existing order. Women who have exposed human rights violations or been critical of the authorities are silenced through smear campaigns and blackmailing ([Amnesty International Public Statement, 2021](#)). Christian converts in particular are at a greater risk of experiencing physical and verbal abuse, harassment, threats, house arrest, discrimination and rejection by family and Muslim community. Female converts in conservative regions also run the risk of being abducted and forcibly married to Muslim men, with the aim of forcing them to return to Islam. This happens infrequently, typically in remote rural areas and in cases where premarital arrangements had already been made before the conversion.

The tight structure of society means that women are also targeted for persecution as a means of inflicting psychological harm on their husbands or other family members.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Azerbaijan	Male Pressure Points Most frequently recorded PPs: WWL 2019 - WWL 2024
	Denied access to social community/networks Discrimination/harassment via education Economic harassment via work/job/business Economic harassment via fines Forced out of home/expulsion Incarceration by government Travel bans/restriction of movement; Violence – physical Violence – psychological Violence - verbal

In Azerbaijan, male converts from Islam are at a greater risk than non-converts of experiencing physical and verbal abuse, harassment, threats, discrimination and rejection by family and Muslim community. Known converts will be harassed and interrogated harshly by their family and community and some have been called to the police station for questioning. “There is extensive evidence,” a country expert adds, “that converts in particular face severe economic consequences as one part of the larger persecution against them.”

Christian men – both converts and non-converts – can be targeted for their role as heads of their families and primary financial providers. When a Christian man becomes a target of persecution (possibly losing his job) his whole family will suffer.

Leaders of non-traditional church groups – usually men – are particular targets of persecution, which will often result in an increase of fear among church members. As a country expert explained: “The state regards pastors and church leaders as primary targets to control Christian activities. They are used as examples for the other Christians of what may be expected. When churches are raided, it is mostly the church leaders who are detained, interrogated, fined, and sometimes harassed. Muslims will hold church leaders primarily responsible for the conversion of their people; active convert leaders will even be attacked more fiercely.”

Christian men are also forced to partake in [mandatory](#) military service (World Population Review, accessed 27 February 2024). With no option for an alternative form of service for conscientious objectors, many men are forced to serve in the army despite their strongly held religiously-based objections to taking an oath or taking up weapons. Travelling from the country for reasons relating to Christian faith is also extremely challenging, especially for church leaders. “The state regulates and/or stops foreigners outright from meeting with local groups as well as locals from travelling abroad for religious educational reasons,” a country expert disclosed.

Persecution of other religious minorities

The government does not target any specific religious group - all Sunni Muslims, Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Bahais etc. experience a high level of state surveillance and oppression.

According to US State Department ([IRFR 2023 Azerbaijan](#)):

- “The NGO Union for Freedom of Political Prisoners of Azerbaijan stated 183 individuals were imprisoned for their religious practices or religiously based opposition to the government as of year's end [2023], compared with 22 at the end of 2022. This group included 59 members of the unregistered Shia group Muslim Unity Movement (MUM), which the government considered an illegal organization that it said incited national and religious enmity and accused of receiving funding from Iran.”
- “In June [2023], the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance stated its ongoing concern over the imprisonment of conscientious objectors and encouraged authorities to take necessary legislative actions to allow alternative service, as stipulated in the constitution. On June 8, Jehovah's Witness and conscientious objector Seymour Mammadov lost his final appeal before the Supreme Court of his conviction and one-year suspended sentence. At year's end, the SCWRA had registered two new religious communities, both Muslim. In June, the SCWRA reported since 2022 it had dismissed 181 Muslim clerics from their positions. Previous statements from officials had noted some of the removals were due to "Iranian infiltration.””
- "The Jehovah's Witnesses annual report issued in November [2023] stated that during the year, there were cases of police interfering with Jehovah's Witnesses peacefully sharing their religious beliefs with others. According to the report, "Typically, police officers take the Witnesses to the police station and threaten them.””

According to [USCIRF 2024 Azerbaijan](#):

- ” In 2023, religious freedom conditions in Azerbaijan trended negatively. The government continued to enforce its 2009 law On Freedom of Religious Beliefs, which required the registration of religious groups to operate legally and engage in worship, mandated the official review and approval of religious literature and other materials, and restricted who could engage in 'religious propaganda' or missionary activity, among other limitations. In keeping with the previous year, the government yet again refused to register any non-Muslim religious community despite continued efforts by Protestant Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses to obtain official registration. The government only reported registering two mosques during the year.”
- “Authorities continued to exert pressure on Muslims related to their religious activities, and they surveilled, fined, detained, and arrested those considered to have violated Azerbaijan's religious regulations. In January and February 2023, courts fined four Muslim men on administrative charges for 'illegally involv[ing] minors in the performance of religious rituals' after they brought their children to a shopping mall to participate in a religious celebration. Authorities subsequently arrested one of the four men on questionable drug trafficking charges. The Muslim Unity Movement (Müsəlman Birliyi Hərəkatı) or MUM - a Shi'a Muslim group that has opposed the government's control of religious practice - continued to experience harassment and persecution that many human rights defenders characterized as politically motivated. Over the course of the year, police detained the group's members, placed them under administrative arrest, and sub-

jected those who were detained or imprisoned to physical and psychological pressure. In several cases, MUM members claimed that authorities beat and tortured them.”

- “Following an armed attack in January on the Azerbaijani Embassy in Tehran, Iran, authorities conducted arrests across the country to counter alleged acts of espionage, efforts to overthrow the government, and drug trafficking. While officials asserted that the individuals arrested in these sweeps sought to establish a theocratic state, human rights defenders contended that many were wrongly detained in likely connection to their criticism of the government's religious policies. At the end of the year [2023], a nongovernmental organization identified 183 persons as 'peaceful believers' unjustly imprisoned in Azerbaijan due to their religious beliefs or activities, which marked a significant increase in that number compared to the preceding year.”
- “Jehovah's Witnesses still could not perform an alternative civilian service in place of carrying out mandatory military service, despite the provision of such an option in the country's constitution. In some instances, Jehovah's Witnesses experienced retaliation for attempting to exercise their right to conscientiously object in accordance with their religious beliefs. In June, the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal of Seymur Mammadov, whose nine-month prison sentence had been converted to a one year suspended sentence the previous year. Relevant government bodies refused to issue passports to other Jehovah's Witnesses or imposed on them exit bans because they had failed to complete their military service.”

Further information

- “Multiple prosecutions and fines of Muslims - who in different parts of Azerbaijan met for Islamic worship in homes without state permission - have followed raids by police and State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations officials. The Muslims were each fined the equivalent of about two months' average wages for those in formal work. For people in rural areas, those without a formal job, or pensioners, such fines are a heavy financial burden.” (Source: [Forum 18, 9 December 2022](#))
- “A Baku court fined Shola Jafarova two months' average wage for holding mourning meetings in the Muslim holy month of Muharram and organising children to sing a mourning song uploaded to social media. A Goychay court similarly fined Samira Jafarova for a social media video with 15 children performing a lamentation for Imam Hussain (the third Imam of Shia Islam). She told her appeal hearing that 'holding a religious ceremony is her right arising from the Constitution', but the court rejected her appeal.” (Source: [Forum 18, 13 December 2022](#))
- “After 12 weeks in jail, a Ganca court changed the nine-month jail term for Jehovah's Witness conscientious objector Seymur Mammadov to a one-year suspended sentence. Another, Royal Karimov, was released after three months' forced detention in a military unit. Both had declared readiness to perform an alternative civilian service. The Human Rights Ombudsperson's Office failed to respond on what action it would take (if any) to ensure that Azerbaijan introduces a civilian alternative service for those unable to serve in the army on grounds of conscience.” (Source: [Forum 18, 16 December 2022](#))

- “At least seven Shia Muslims faced court cases for taking their children to a celebration in a shopping center of the anniversary of the birth of Fatima, the daughter of the Islamic prophet Mohammad. Four were fined two months' average wage. One of those fined, Mail Karimov, was arrested at the court and is among hundreds of Shia Muslims in jail under investigation on drugs charges which human rights defenders say are fabricated. The criminal trial of Shia Imam Sardar Babayev continues in Baku.” (Source: [Forum 18, 21 April 2023](#))

Trends Summary

There have been no major changes in Azerbaijan since the publication of WWL 2024.

1) Azerbaijan continues to have very restrictive legislation

Azerbaijan is a country that can best be described as an 'intelligent dictatorship' under President Ilham Aliyev. To stay in power, the government uses a wide range of tactics. First of all, the country has very restrictive legislation. Since 1992 the government has amended the Law on Religious Freedom 14 times. One of the very negative effects of this is that at least six times since 1991 all churches in Azerbaijan have been obliged to re-register under increasingly harsher conditions. It should come as no surprise that at each round of re-registration fewer and fewer congregations manage to satisfy the requirements.

2) All forms of opposition are under constant surveillance

The security and secret services have a wide mandate and are numerically strong. All opposition, be it political, social, religious, or through the media, are under constant surveillance. Arrests and beatings occur on a very regular basis. Churches that have no registration face the constant threat of raids, confiscation, arrests and fines. Pastors and other church leaders are invited from time to time to go to the police station or the secret police for 'discussions', just to keep the pressure up. The authorities have also managed to create an atmosphere of distrust among Christians. It is believed that the majority of churches have been infiltrated by informers who report to the authorities. As a result, no one knows who can be trusted any more.

3) There are no major political threats challenging the regime

In many respects Azerbaijan has developed the most sophisticated and intelligent system for staying in power. So far, it has been very successful and there are currently no major threats challenging the regime. In April 2018 President Aliyev secured a fourth term while opposition boycotted the elections. Due to the high level of state control and the weakness of the opposition, there is hardly any chance that there will be a change of government in the near future. The resounding success in September 2023 in the war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh increased President Aliyev's popularity and following presidential elections on 7 February 2024, he is now serving another seven-year term in office having won over 92% of the vote.

Further useful reports

Further background information per country and 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/wwl-background/>
- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/>.

External Links

- Copyright, sources and definitions: Background country information - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-background/>
- Map of country: Freedom House's country profile - <https://freedomhouse.org/country/nagorno-karabakh>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Christian Post, 28 April 2024 - <https://www.christianpost.com/news/armenian-church-village-erased-in-nagorno-karabakh.html>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: International Christian Concern, 23 May 2024 - <https://www.persecution.org/2024/05/23/azerbaijan-destroys-armenian-church-and-village-builds-mosque-in-conquered-artsakh/>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Christian Post - <https://www.christianpost.com/news/azerbaijan-destroying-armenian-churches-heritage-sites-report.html>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Christianity Today - <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/10/armenia-azerbaijan-artsakh-satellite-images-document-cultural-erasure/>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Caucasus Heritage Watch - https://caucasusheritage.cornell.edu/?page_id=866
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: IRFR 2023 Azerbaijan - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/azerbaijan/>
- Areas where Christians face most difficulties: IRFR 2023 Azerbaijan - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/azerbaijan/>
- 5 Year trends: Violence against Christians description: lightning offensive - <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/nagorno-karabakh-conflict>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: UN News, 1 January 2022 - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1108872>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: (Amnesty International Public Statement, 2021). - <https://eurasia.amnesty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/azerbaijan-gender-based-reprisals-against-women-must-stop.pdf>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: mandatory - <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-with-mandatory-military-service>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Azerbaijan - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/azerbaijan/>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: USCIRF 2024 Azerbaijan - <https://www.uscifr.gov/annual-reports?country=31>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 9 December 2022 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2794
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 13 December 2022 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2795
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 16 December 2022 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2796
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Forum 18, 21 April 2023 - https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2826