
World Watch Research

Togo:

Persecution Dynamics

February 2025



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

February 2025

© Open Doors International

research@od.org

Contents

World Watch List 2025 – Top 50.....	2
World Watch List 2025 – Ranks 51-78	4
Copyright, sources and definitions	5
Reporting period	6
Brief country details.....	6
Map of country	7
Dominant persecution engines and drivers.....	7
Brief description of the persecution situation.....	8
Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period	8
Specific examples of positive developments	8
Christian communities and how they are affected.....	8
Areas where Christians face most difficulties.....	9
Position on the World Watch List	9
Persecution engines.....	10
Drivers of persecution.....	11
The Persecution pattern	13
Pressure in the 5 spheres of life.....	13
Violence	20
5 Year trends.....	22
Gender-specific religious persecution / Female	23
Gender-specific religious persecution / Male.....	24
Persecution of other religious minorities	25
Trends Summary	25
Further useful reports.....	26
External Links	26

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

Togo: Population (UN estimate for 2024)

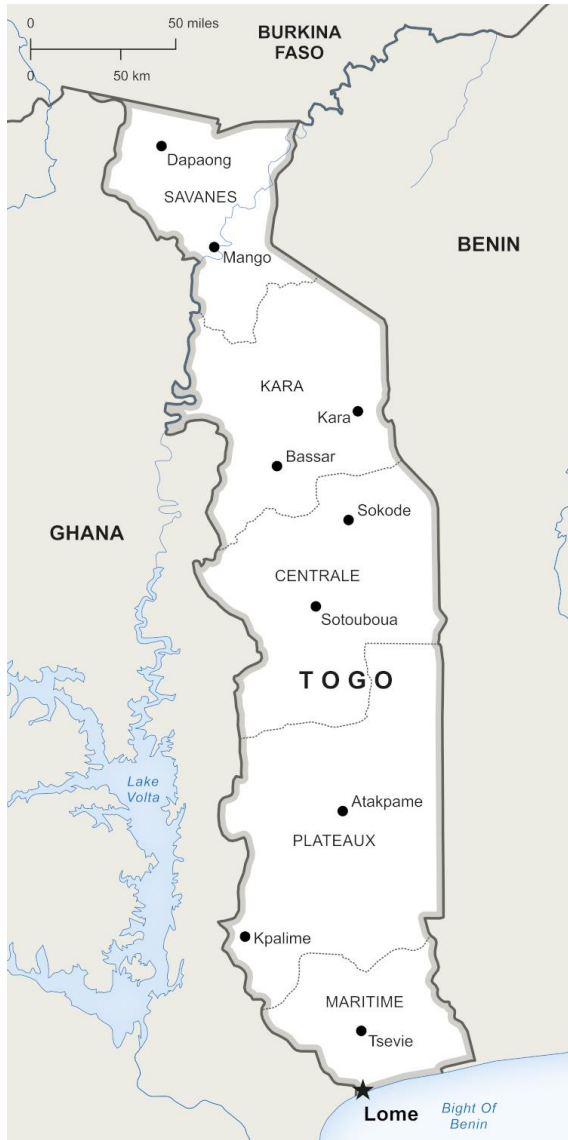
9,261,000

Togo: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	4,803,000	51.9
Muslim	1,502,000	16.2
Hindu	0	0.0
Buddhist	0	0.0
Ethnic religionist	2,867,000	31.0
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	58,300	0.6
Atheist	2,600	0.0
Agnostic	21,500	0.2
Other	5,900	0.1
<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

Christians are mainly to be found in the southern part of the country, while Muslims dominate the central and the northern parts of the country.

Map of country



Dominant persecution engines and drivers

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

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

Brief description of the persecution situation

In Togo, Christians face a multifaceted landscape of challenges that undermine their religious freedom. Government officials often use their power to create difficulties for Christians, particularly in obtaining land or permits for building churches. Additionally, Christians are subjected to *Clan oppression* rooted in traditional African belief systems like Voodoo, especially in certain regions where young male Christians are forced to participate in ceremonies that contradict their faith. The situation is even more perilous near the Burkina Faso border, where jihadist incursions have heightened fear and encouraged local Muslim youth to radicalize, making it particularly challenging for Evangelicals to evangelize among Muslims, and posing severe risks to those who convert from Islam. Compounding these issues, *Organized corruption and crime*, including networks that have penetrated government structures, pose significant threats to Christians who denounce these illicit activities, further eroding the rule of law and jeopardizing Christian rights in the country.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- **Complicated and lengthy registration process:** The requirement for religious groups to register with the government is burdensome, with a complex and lengthy process that can take several years. This has resulted in many Christian denominations operating without proper registration, which leaves them vulnerable to government crackdowns and limitations on their activities.
- **Restrictions on worship:** The government has imposed restrictions on the days of worship, specifically designating Sunday for Christians. This limitation restricts Christians from freely choosing when to worship, which can be seen as an infringement on their religious freedom.
- **Curfews on religious activities:** Wakes, funerals and other Christian religious activities are subject to a 20:00hrs curfew, further limiting the ability of Christians to conduct their religious observances freely. This curfew, along with other restrictions, adds to the challenges Christians face in practicing their faith without interference.
- **Other violations:** Christians face extreme pressure from indigenous religious groups to participate in non-Christian rituals. In the northern regions, Christians are targeted for kidnapping and ransom demands. Converts in areas dominated by indigenous religious groups, as well as in the northern regions, experience severe pressure. Christians often struggle to obtain land for building places of worship.

Specific examples of positive developments

In a situation where persecution exists, it is always positive to see members of different religious groups respecting and attending each other's ceremonies. That is the case in Togo.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians: The many foreign Christians in the country are not isolated and can worship side by side with other Christian communities. They are therefore not scored as a separate category in WWL analysis.

Historical Christian communities: The dominant historical Christian groups (such as the Roman Catholic churches) do not face any major problems compared to other Christian groups in the country.

Converts to Christianity: These are converts from Islam or traditional African religions (ATR). Converts from Islam face the most severe persecution in Togo and are forced to practice their Christian faith in secret.

Non-traditional Christian communities: The Christians in this category - who often belong to Pentecostal groups - tend to be active in outreach and evangelism and often face more difficulties than Christians belonging to the historical churches.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The northern part of the country and areas where Voodoo is very prominent are the main hotspots.

Position on the World Watch List

Togo: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2025	54	66
WWL 2024	52	68
WWL 2023	49	70
WWL 2022	44	71
WWL 2021	43	71

The two-point increase in Togo's overall persecution score in WWL 2025 is primarily due to both heightened pressure on Christians and a slight rise in the violence score. The average pressure on Christians increased from 8.7 points to 9.0 points, signaling a noticeable uptick in the difficulties they face in various spheres of life. Pressure within the *Church sphere* rose from 11.0 points to 11.5 points, indicating increased restrictions and difficulties in practicing faith. Similarly, the *Community sphere* saw a rise from 9.3 points to 10.4 points, reflecting growing social and familial pressure, particularly in local communities. The violence score rose modestly from 8.9 points to 9.2 points, reflecting a slight increase in violent acts targeting Christians, though violence levels remain below those seen in countries with extreme persecution.

Over the last five reporting periods, Togo's overall persecution score has steadily increased, with a range of 11 points between WWL 2021 (43 points) and WWL 2025 (54 points), highlighting a trend of growing challenges for Christians in the country.

Persecution engines

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

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

Islamic oppression (Medium)

Islamic oppression is particularly pervasive in the northern regions of Togo where the Muslim population is dominant. The climate of religious discrimination has intensified, affecting Christians in various aspects of their daily life. Converts from Islam are particularly affected and often resort to practicing their faith in secrecy, fearing hostile reactions from their families and community members. The stakes are even higher when considering the influence of radical Islamic groups active in the broader West African region.

Clan oppression (Medium)

Voodoo and ancestral worship have deep roots in Togolese society, particularly in the eastern and southern regions. While the prominence of Voodoo has declined over time, a significant percentage of the population still practices it or incorporates various elements into their Christian or Islamic faith. Traditional ethnic leaders are overtly antagonistic towards conversions to Christianity, especially if the new Christians are not willing to integrate Voodoo practices into their newfound faith. This animosity often leads to social ostracization and sometimes even to acts of violence against Christian converts.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

Togo has a dark history of dictatorship, with President Gnassingbe Eyadema reported to have been responsible for the deaths of over 15,000 people. His son, Faure Gnassingbe, who took power in 2005, has continued this autocratic legacy. Despite widespread accusations of corruption and authoritarianism, including election rigging, the regime remains in place. In this oppressive political atmosphere, Christians find it exceedingly difficult to exercise their rights. The authoritarian govern-

ment imposes restrictions that particularly impact churches and Christian communities, making it almost impossible for them to voice any form of dissent without fearing repercussions.

Organized corruption and crime (Medium)

Corruption is rife in Togo, as evidenced by its ranking of 121 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's [2024 Corruption Perceptions Index](#) with a score of 32/100. The Eyadema family, which has ruled for over five decades, has been implicated in numerous illegal activities that permeate all sectors of governance. This corruption has a direct impact on freedom of religion. Whether it is in the judicial system or in other areas related to religious freedom, Christians often find themselves disadvantaged. This institutional corruption has created a daunting environment for Christians, hindering them from practicing their faith freely and exposing them to various forms of exploitation and abuse.

Drivers of persecution

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

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

Drivers of Islamic oppression

- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Medium to High):** With the constant threat from violent Islamic militants at the northern border, the rhetoric of Islamic teachers has become more hostile towards Christians. Imams and sheiks are not only teaching anti-Christian sentiments but also tacitly or openly supporting extremist ideologies. The consequences extend from harassment and discrimination to potentially life-threatening situations for Christians.
- **Ordinary citizens (Medium to High):** As the tension escalates, citizens in Muslim-dominated areas are becoming more active in targeting Christians. This is not just limited to social ostracization; there are instances of mobs targeting Christian communities and businesses.
- **Family (Medium):** The extended family continues to be a source of persecution for converts from Islam, especially in the northern and Muslim-dominated regions. The increasing influence of radical Islamic groups has caused the pressure on converts to renounce their new faith to intensify.

Drivers of Clan oppression

- **Ethnic group leaders (Medium to High):** Animist and clan beliefs are becoming more organized and aggressive, targeting Christians who oppose traditional practices. Voodoo priests and other ethnic group leaders are especially critical of Evangelicals, condemning their efforts to spread Christianity as an assault on traditional beliefs. Encouraged by their clan and Voodoo leaders, local youth are becoming more proactive in persecuting Christians. This includes acts of violence and intimidation, especially against those engaged in evangelism.

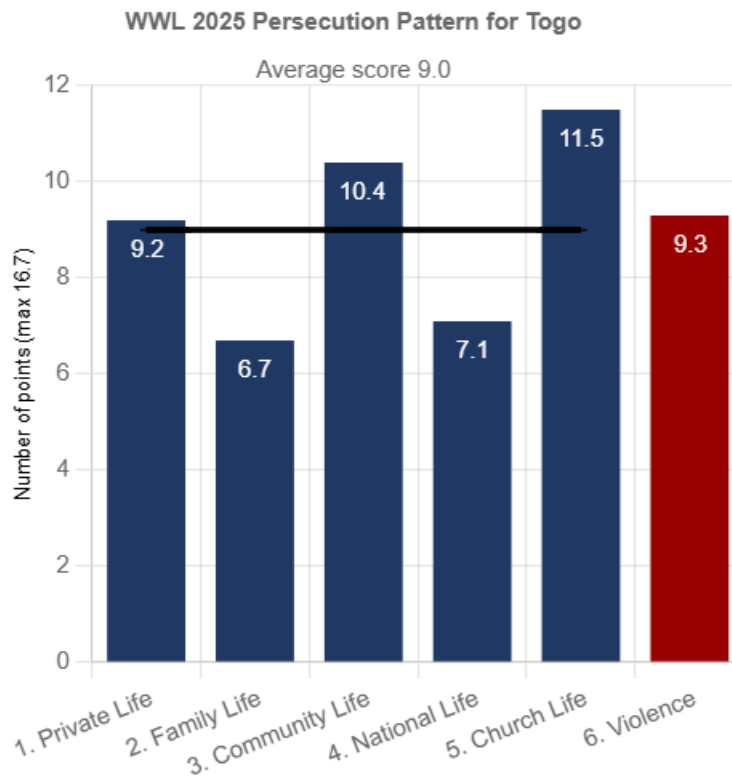
Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium to High):** The government is increasingly aiming to control all spheres of public life, including church activities. Christians who voice opposition to the government's policies face bureaucratic hurdles like the denial of land and building permits for churches. The authorities are using administrative obstacles as a form of soft persecution to keep the church under control.

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

- **Criminal networks (Medium to High):** These networks are multifaceted, involving individuals in government who are facilitating corruption, as well as those in criminal enterprises such as highly illegal poaching. Christians who take a stand against these corrupt practices are targeted for reprisals, which can range from legal trouble to physical harm. Given the government's increasing control over various sectors, these criminal networks are becoming more emboldened.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2025 Persecution pattern for Togo shows:

- The average pressure on Christians rose to 9.0 points in WWL 2025, up from 8.7 points in WWL 2024.
- Pressure in the *Church sphere* was highest with 11.5 points, rising from 11.0 points in WWL 2024. Pressure in the *Community sphere* increased to 10.4 points, up from 9.3 points in WWL 2024.
- The score for violence targeting Christians for their faith rose to 9.3 points, compared to 8.9 points in WWL 2024.

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 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (2.75 points)

Christians, particularly converts from Islam or traditional belief systems, face significant risks when expressing their faith through digital platforms such as blogs and social media, including Facebook. Sharing their beliefs online exposes their Christian identity, often resulting in social and familial repercussions. Converts, in particular, are at heightened risk as public expressions of their faith are

viewed as acts of defiance against deeply entrenched religious and cultural norms. This can lead to harassment, ostracism and threats, both online and offline, as their posts are frequently scrutinized by family members, community leaders, and even authorities. In some cases, online expressions of faith are used as evidence to justify punitive actions, including pressure to recant, exclusion from community activities, or public shaming. For converts, these risks are compounded by their vulnerable status within communities that strongly oppose conversion. The fear of retaliation forces many to limit their digital presence or to avoid discussing their faith altogether, making it challenging to engage openly in religious discourse or connect with broader Christian networks online.

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

Displaying Christian images or symbols is risky for Christians, particularly in regions dominated by Islam or traditional belief systems. In areas where Islam is the majority, such displays are often perceived as provocative or as an attempt to challenge the dominant religious and cultural norms, leading to harassment, social exclusion, or even threats of violence. Similarly, in regions with deeply entrenched traditional belief systems, Christian symbols are often seen as alien or as a direct affront to the community's spiritual practices, provoking hostility from community leaders or ATR adherents. The risks associated with displaying Christian imagery extend beyond mere visual representation, as these symbols are frequently interpreted as overt expressions of religious identity. In communities resistant to Christian presence, such displays can lead to the targeting of individuals, families, or even entire congregations. Public backlash may include vandalism of Christian properties, verbal or physical harassment or societal exclusion.

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

Conversion to Christianity faces significant opposition, particularly in regions dominated by Islam or African Traditional Religions (ATR). Individuals who convert often experience intense social and familial backlash, as their decision is perceived as a betrayal of deeply rooted cultural and religious norms. Converts frequently face ostracism, being disowned by their families, and losing access to communal resources or social networks. In some cases, they are subjected to harassment, threats, or physical violence, creating an environment of fear and isolation. In ATR-dominated areas, converts are often pressured to participate in traditional rituals, even after their conversion, as a way of forcing them to conform to community norms. Refusing these practices can result in further alienation or direct hostility. In regions where Islam is dominant, converts face similar challenges, with their actions viewed as a rejection of the majority faith, leading to accusations of betrayal and acts of intimidation or violence. These societal repercussions make the act of conversion a highly risky and isolating process, forcing many to conceal their new faith to avoid persecution.

Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.50 points)

Private acts of worship are particularly challenging for Christians who have converted from Islam or African Traditional Religions (ATR), especially in tightly-knit and communal societies. For converts, individual practices such as prayer or Bible reading carry significant risks, as these acts can reveal their faith to family members or neighbors, leading to severe consequences. In many cases, converts are expelled from their homes, shunned by their families, or ostracized within their communities for what

is perceived as a rejection of cultural and religious norms. The communal nature of these societies exacerbates the difficulty, as privacy is limited, and religious activities often attract scrutiny. In ATR-dominated areas, private worship can provoke hostility, with converts accused of abandoning traditional values or undermining community unity. Similarly, in Muslim-majority regions, private acts of worship are often seen as acts of defiance, inviting threats, harassment, or forced attempts to reconvert. This constant fear of exposure forces many converts to practice their faith in secrecy.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (2.50 points)

In Muslim-majority areas, Christian couples may face community rejection, threats and difficulties in organizing ceremonies, making it hard to freely practice their faith. In ATR-dominated regions, there is often an expectation for wedding ceremonies to incorporate traditional rituals, which are incompatible with Christian beliefs. Refusing to include these practices can lead to accusations of disrespecting local customs, social isolation, or disruptions to the event. In areas where the Catholic Church holds significant influence, newer denominations, such as Pentecostal Christian groups, also encounter resistance, as their practices are seen as diverging from established norms. These challenges make it difficult for many Christians to celebrate their weddings according to their faith.

Block 2.11: Spouses of converts have been put under pressure (successfully or unsuccessfully) by others to divorce. (2.25 points)

Converts in Togo often face intense pressure from their spouses or the family of their spouses to divorce as a direct result of their decision to change faiths. In regions dominated by Islam or ATR, conversion is viewed as a betrayal of deeply rooted cultural and religious norms, prompting spouses or their extended families to demand separation. This pressure can lead to the breakdown of the marriage, accompanied by social ostracism and expulsion from the community. In ATR-dominated areas, families may resort to using traditional voodoo black magic to harm converts, inflict misfortune, or, in extreme cases, threaten their lives. Such actions aim to coerce converts to renounce their new faith or to punish them for their decision.

Block 2.5: Burials of Christians have been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites. (2.00 points)

Burial of Christians, particularly involving converts with a traditional voodoo or Islamic background, encounter significant challenges in regions where these beliefs dominate. Converts often face pressure from their communities or families to abandon Christian burial rites and conform to ATR or Islamic practices. In many cases, this coercion results in ceremonies that incorporate non-Christian rituals, disregarding the wishes of the deceased or their families. Such practices are driven by cultural and religious norms that view Christian burial customs as alien or incompatible with local traditions. The refusal to follow these expectations can lead to disputes, social tensions, or even denial of access to communal burial grounds.

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (2.00 points)

Parents in regions dominated by voodoo or Islam face considerable challenges in raising their children according to Christian beliefs. The societal and cultural expectations in these areas often conflict with Christian values and so pressure from community members, extended families and local leaders frequently forces children to participate in non-Christian rituals or practices, undermining parental efforts to nurture their faith. Additionally, schools and communal settings in these regions often promote norms that align with the dominant religion, leaving Christian parents with limited support or opportunities to reinforce their beliefs.

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.). (3.25 points)

Christians in regions dominated by voodoo, Islam, or strong traditional systems often face pervasive monitoring at the community level by local leaders, youth groups and mobs. This scrutiny can include being reported to authorities, subjected to surveillance, and having their communications, such as phone calls or messages, intercepted or censored. Community leaders and informal groups often act as enforcers of local norms, closely observing Christian activities to ensure they do not deviate from dominant cultural or religious practices. This monitoring becomes particularly intense for converts, whose actions are often viewed as a challenge to the community's cohesion and identity. Internal conflicts among different Christian denominations also compound the issue, as divisions can be exploited to justify additional scrutiny or hostility. This constant surveillance creates an oppressive environment, limiting Christians' ability to freely practice their faith or engage openly in their communities.

Block 3.5: Christians have been put under pressure to take part in non-Christian religious ceremonies or community events. (3.25 points)

Christians in Togo, particularly in regions where voodoo and animist traditions dominate, face persistent pressure to participate in non-Christian religious ceremonies and rituals. This pressure is often directed at children and youth, who are expected by community norms or school authorities to take part in voodoo ceremonies, such as initiation rites or traditional festivals. Refusal to participate is perceived as rejecting cultural values, resulting in social isolation, harassment, or penalties for both the children and their families. Adults also encounter coercion, as community leaders and neighbors insist on their involvement in rituals tied to ancestral worship or seasonal celebrations. This pressure frequently arises in communal settings where non-participation is highly visible and interpreted as defiance of the group's unity and traditions. Despite constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, Christians often find it challenging to refuse participation, as doing so can lead to severe social and economic consequences.

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.). (3.00 points)

Christians in Togo, particularly in regions dominated by voodoo, Islam, or traditional belief systems, frequently experience harassment, threats, and various obstacles in their daily lives due to their faith. This includes being pressured to comply with community-imposed norms such as dress codes and participation in non-Christian practices. Non-compliance is quickly understood as disrespect for cultural norms and often results in public shaming, social isolation and verbal abuse, creating an atmosphere of intimidation for Christians on a daily basis. In some cases, Christians are publicly confronted or harassed for attending church services, hosting religious gatherings, or expressing their faith in visible ways. The involvement of youth groups and mobs can escalate tensions, leading to threats or acts of intimidation, further isolating Christians within their communities. Again, internal conflicts among Christian groups in certain regions further complicate these challenges, as differences in denomination or practice can exacerbate tensions and make unity difficult.

Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (3.00 points)

In some regions of Togo, Christians face ongoing challenges in accessing shared community resources such as grazing lands, clean water, and other communal facilities. These difficulties often stem from religious dynamics, where Christians are marginalized in favor of dominant groups adhering to voodoo, Islam, or other traditional belief systems. Community leaders or elders sometimes impose informal restrictions, denying Christians equal access to these resources as a means of exerting pressure or punishing them for their faith. For example, in ATR-dominated areas, grazing lands and water sources are often considered sacred or tied to traditional rituals, making Christian use of these resources unwelcome. Similarly, in Muslim-majority regions, Christians may encounter subtle or overt exclusion from community wells or communal projects, reinforcing their sense of isolation. These barriers not only limit the ability of Christians to meet basic needs but also deepen social divides, further marginalizing them within their communities.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

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)

Christians in Togo often encounter discrimination when dealing with local authorities, including administrative bodies and government agencies, due to their faith. In many cases, these challenges are compounded by the alignment of local officials with dominant religious practices, such as voodoo or Islam, which influence their actions and decisions. Local authorities, sometimes deeply rooted in these religious traditions, are known to perpetuate bias against Christians, particularly those who are outspoken about social or governance issues. This bias can manifest in delays, denials of permits, or unequal treatment in accessing public services.

Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

In some regions of Togo, Christians face obstacles in career advancement within public office or government positions due to their faith. While religious affiliation is not officially a barrier, promotion and hiring practices are often influenced by informal networks, cultural biases, and alignment with dominant religious or social groups. In areas dominated by Islam or ATR, Christians may find themselves excluded from opportunities, as appointments and promotions are frequently swayed by community dynamics that favor individuals adhering to the majority religion or traditional practices. There have also been reports of affiliations with secret societies or sects influencing career progression, where Christians who refuse to participate face significant disadvantages.

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

Christians in Togo face significant challenges in expressing their views publicly, particularly on issues related to governance, justice and societal accountability. Freedom House has noted ongoing restrictions on personal expression, as well as limitations on media and press freedom, creating an environment that fosters widespread self-censorship ([Freedom in the World 2024 Togo](#), Section D). For Christians, these challenges are compounded by societal and cultural dynamics in regions dominated by Islam or ATR, where expressing dissent or advocating for justice may be perceived as a challenge to the status quo. Governmental restrictions play a key role, with laws and practices that stifle open discourse. Authorities closely monitor public statements, social media activity, and press coverage, discouraging criticism and often targeting individuals who voice concerns about corruption or injustice. For Christians advocating for governance reforms or speaking out on ethical issues, these restrictions can result in harassment, threats, or exclusion from public discussions. In addition, local community leaders and informal groups in ATR- or Muslim-majority areas may pressure Christians to conform to dominant views, further limiting their ability to express their beliefs freely.

Block 4.14: Those who caused harm to Christians have deliberately been left unpunished. (2.75 points)

Perpetrators who have harmed Christians in Togo have not always faced consistent punishment, reflecting broader issues within the justice system. While there have been instances where justice was served—such as in Tchamba, where an individual responsible for ransacking a church was compelled by the public prosecutor to repair the damage—many cases remain unresolved or inadequately addressed. In some situations, local authorities discourage complainants from pursuing justice, prioritizing social harmony over accountability. This often leaves Christians with little recourse for grievances. Theft from churches or acts of vandalism are sometimes resolved through negotiated settlements rather than legal action, undermining the sense of justice for the victims. Additionally, law enforcement agencies have been reported to neglect investigations or fail to take meaningful action against known offenders, further eroding confidence in the authorities. This inconsistent application of justice creates an environment where those who harm Christians may feel emboldened, knowing that the likelihood of facing consequences is low.

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. (4.00 points)

From Christian denominations, only Catholics and Protestants are officially recognized and do not require registration. However, all other Christian groups, including evangelical movements, must go through a mandatory registration process, creating an unequal system. This process involves an extensive application and a registration fee of 150,000 CFA francs (\$255), which is prohibitively expensive for many smaller denominations. Despite this requirement, the government has not acted on pending registration applications for the past decade and has not accepted any new applications since 2013. This inaction leaves many Christian groups unable to operate legally.

Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.75 points)

Christian churches encounter numerous challenges in organizing religious activities outside their physical compounds, with restrictions imposed by both government authorities and societal dynamics. Government regulations strictly limit religious gatherings beyond church premises, requiring prior notification for events such as night worship services. Even when churches comply with these requirements, requests are frequently rejected, citing public safety or noise pollution concerns. These restrictions significantly hinder the ability of Christians to hold open-air services, outreach programs, or community-based religious events. In regions where Islam or African Traditional Religions dominate, societal pressures further complicate efforts to organize activities outside church grounds. Local communities and leaders often view such gatherings as disruptive or as an intrusion into spaces aligned with other religious traditions. This hostility, coupled with bureaucratic barriers, creates an environment where Christian activities outside church compounds are not only difficult to organize but also fraught with the risk of harassment or outright prohibition.

Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (3.50 points)

Christians face considerable obstacles in constructing or refurbishing church buildings and reclaiming historical religious premises, challenges that are further exacerbated by prevalent land disputes in the country. In regions dominated by adherents of Islam or ATR, land designated for church construction is frequently contested, with local communities often opposing the establishment or expansion of Christian sites. These disputes reflect deep-seated cultural and religious tensions, where Christians are viewed as encroaching on sacred or community-controlled lands. Adding to these challenges is the burdensome registration process, which acts as a significant barrier to establishing new churches. Without proper registration, churches cannot secure the legal status required to claim land or initiate construction. The process itself is expensive and time-consuming, requiring a fee of 150,000 CFA francs (approximately US \$255) and extensive documentation, which many Christian groups struggle to provide.

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

Churches face significant obstacles in organizing Christian activities within their places of worship, largely due to government regulations that restrict collective worship to Sundays. Outside of funerals and designated holidays, gatherings for prayer on other days are effectively prohibited, making it difficult for Christians to freely engage in their religious practices. This regulation is strictly enforced under the guise of addressing noise pollution, with law enforcement frequently intervening in response to complaints. These complaints often come not only from external parties but also from within the Christian community, as internal conflicts sometimes lead to churches filing grievances against one another.

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.*

Togo: 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)?	4	5
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?	6	5
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)?	5	4
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 *	3
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	129	100 *
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 *	10 *
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 *	5
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	38	10 *
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

In the WWL 2025 reporting period:

- Christians killed:** In the northern part of the country, where there are often low-level cross-border jihadist attacks, at least two Christians were killed, according to a local researcher. In the southern part of the country, two more were killed by ATR adherents. What emboldens the perpetrators of such killings is the absence of proper police investigations; these deaths were treated by the authorities as though they were nothing out of the ordinary.

- Churches attacked:** The government believes that over 200 unregistered churches operate in the country. Authorities have never accepted the registration applications of these churches. During the reporting period, six churches were closed. The closures were carried out under the pretext of noise pollution.

5 Year trends

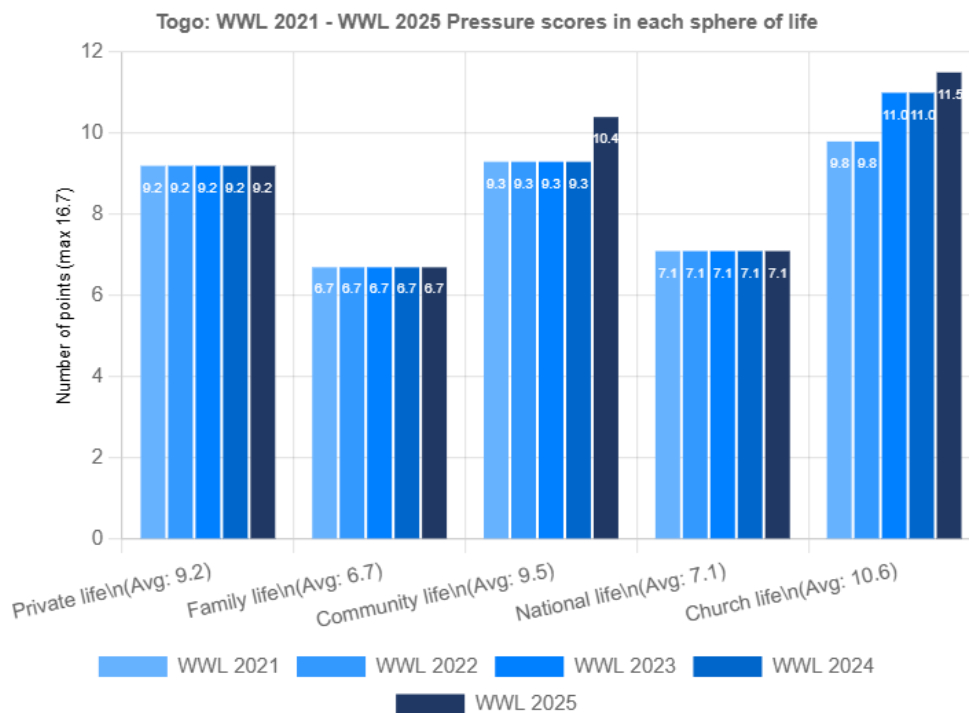
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

5 Year trends: Average pressure

Togo: WWL 2021 - WWL 2025	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2025	9.0
2024	8.7
2023	8.7
2022	8.4
2021	8.4

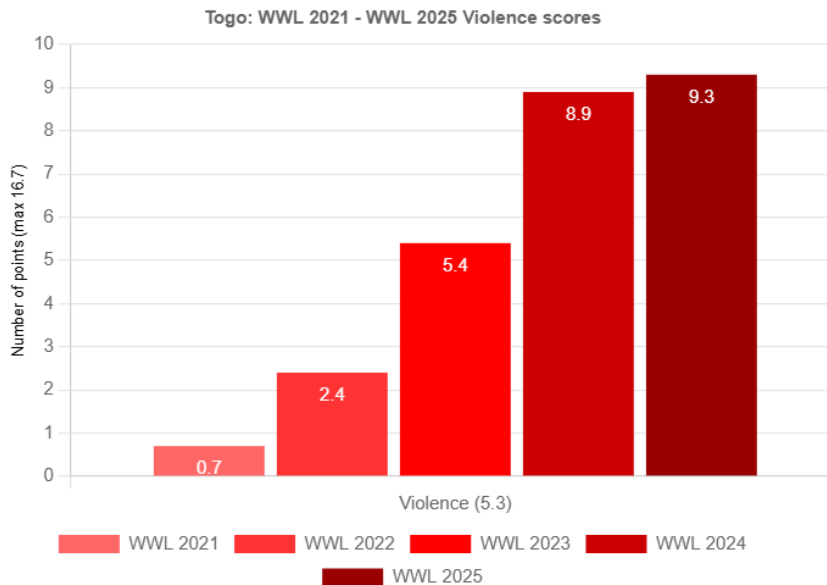
The chart above indicates that while the increase in violence is not dramatic, there is a progressive rise, starting from 8.4 points in WWL 2021 and reaching 9.0 points in WWL 2025.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



As can be seen in the chart above, the average sphere of life scores over the most recent five WWL reporting periods indicate that the *Church sphere* scores highest with an average of 10.6 points, followed by the *Community sphere* with a five-year average of 9.5 points. The *Family sphere* scores the lowest with 6.7 points. While pressure in the *Private, Family and National spheres* has stabilized, pressure in the *Community and Church spheres* shows an upward trend.

5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



The five-year average score for violence is 5.3 points. Although this average appears relatively low, the progression is alarming, starting at 0.7 points in WWL 2021 and steadily increasing to 9.3 points in WWL 2025. The range between WWL 2021 and WWL 2025 is a striking 8.6 points, highlighting a significant escalation in violence over the period.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

As is the case for men, women and girls in Togo may find themselves involved against their will in traditional rites and practices, such as Voodoo or 'generation parties', depending on the communities in which they live. A country expert explained: “The patriarchal law that subjects them to male authority makes women and girls vulnerable to persecution. The financial precariousness of women makes them vulnerable. The girl's lack of schooling easily exposes her to persecution ... She has no right to personal choice.” These vulnerabilities inadvertently expose economically disadvantaged women and girls to sexual exploitation by illicit networks — many of them are sold into sexual slavery without their consent ([USDS, 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report](#)).

Converts from Muslim or Traditional African Religion backgrounds face additional challenges for their faith. Forced marriage is a common method of preventing female converts from leaving their parent’s religion. Some Muslim families have deliberately forced their daughters to marry a strict Muslim husband to prevent them from living as practicing Christians. They are prevented from marrying another Christian of their choice, as the family will oppose the marriage based on religion. Animist parents have been known to act similarly.

Local sources report that there is a high intolerance to converts from Islam to Christianity especially in the central and northern regions; only widows and outcasts are allowed to become Christians. “Many women are expelled from their homes because of their conversions in the north and far north. In some cases, after several months or years they have the opportunity to see their children again but rarely to return to their homes,” a source disclosed. Female converts characteristically face physical beatings, abandonment, sexual abuse including rape, verbal abuse, disinheritance, eviction and threats. If already married, significant pressure is also applied on their spouse to divorce them and refuse the convert custody of their children. It often occurs that an unmarried convert is forced to accept a marriage arranged by her parents to a non-Christian. If she refuses, this may lead to her being abducted and forcibly taken to the home of the intended man. Despite Togolese law stipulating that both parties must consent to marriage, forced marriages such as these continue to take place in [several regions](#) across the country (HRW, 17 November 2022).

In extreme cases, forms of sexual slavery have been reported. Some years ago, Human Rights Watch interviewed several child sex workers in Lomé who revealed that some girls had come to Lomé under conditions of child trafficking and had been forced into sex work after escaping or being abandoned ([HRW, 1 April 2003](#)). See also: US State Department [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report - Togo](#).

Church leaders and pastors encourage new converts to keep their distance from their families in the light of these harsh responses. Christian women who leave Catholicism can also face many of the aforementioned forms of pressure and violence.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Christian men and boys can be affected by cultural traditions such as Voodoo, which sometimes results in traditional practices inflicting suffering on children. This is particularly prevalent in rural areas. They can also be [forcibly recruited](#) by Islamic extremists for domestic terrorism or, by criminal gangs for drug trafficking (VOA, 13 July 2022). Togolese boys are also victim of trafficking; for the most part they have been recruited into agricultural labor in southwestern Nigeria ([HRW, 1 April 2003](#)). Christian leaders who speak out against the government risk being arbitrarily arrested and harassed by state agents. Sources report that communications of church leaders are closely monitored by the government in a bid to intimidate and repress critical voices. A country expert explains: “The increased use of electronic surveillance software to spy and intercept communications of Christians and senior church leaders is eroding all the remaining [safe] spaces that citizens had. The surveillance software used is able to access phone microphones without the knowledge of the owner. Increasing arbitrary arrests are also leading to self-censorship.”

The harshest persecution, however, is experienced by converts. Male Christians from a Muslim or Animist background can face physical abuse, verbal harassment, rejection, disinheritance, reduced food, threats and stigma because of their faith. Some men and boys are forced to flee as a result. Reports further indicate that Christians may be denied property lettings for a business, or be made redundant in favor of a Muslim employee.

Male converts come under harsh scrutiny in their local communities and can face intimidation and threats on a daily basis, including forced divorce. “Christian converts who are men report that once their families find out about their new faith, their wives and children are taken from them,” a source revealed.

Persecution of other religious minorities

Most Togolese are followers either of Christianity, ATR or Islam. According to the US State Department [IRFR 2023 Togo](#): The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Nichiren Buddhists, followers of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, Bahai and Hindus are among other religious groups in the country. There were no reports about Muslims, adherents of Animism or other religious groups experiencing any significant problems due to their faith.

Trends Summary

1) Political stability at risk: The resurgence of coups in the region

Togo's political landscape has been largely shaped by the long-standing rule of President Faure Gnassingbé, who has held power since 2005 after succeeding his father, who ruled from 1967. The political environment in Togo increasingly resembles a dynastic rule rather than a democratic system, with Faure Gnassingbé's continued leadership highlighting the deep entrenchment of the family in the country's governance. While there have been some economic reforms, meaningful political change remains elusive, with the opposition struggling against a system marred by allegations of electoral fraud and a lack of political openness. The fragile nature of Togo's political stability is further exacerbated by the resurgence of coups in neighboring West African countries during 2022 and 2023, raising concerns about the potential for similar destabilization in Togo. The regional trend of military takeovers challenges the status quo and highlights the vulnerability of countries like Togo with fragile political systems.

2) Rising Islamic extremist threat and border security concerns

Togo's border with Burkina Faso has become increasingly precarious due to the infiltration of violent Islamic groups from Burkina Faso. This has heightened the risk for the Togolese population, particularly the Christian communities in the north, who are increasingly vulnerable to extremist violence. In response, the Togolese government has bolstered its military presence along the border, with Burkina Faso granting permission for Togolese troops to conduct counter-terrorism operations within its territory. Over the past two years, jihadist groups have expanded their activities into Togo's northern regions, signaling an alarming escalation in extremist threats. The government's reaction has included the implementation of restrictive security measures aimed at containing the spread of jihadist influence. However, these measures also contribute to a climate of fear and repression, complicating the already fragile security situation in the country.

3) Deep-rooted authoritarianism: The Gnassingbé family's grip on Togo

The Gnassingbé family's dominance over Togo extends beyond the political sphere, deeply influencing the social and economic fabric of the nation. Under the long-standing rule of the Gnassingbé dynasty, every aspect of life in Togo has come under the influence of the president's family. This deep-rooted authoritarianism has stifled democratic processes and curtailed civil liberties, with the government exerting control over political, social and private life. Opposition voices are regularly suppressed, and the media operates under significant constraints. The recent constitutional amendments that further entrench the power of the presidency, despite calls for political reform, exemplify the regime's determination to maintain control. This pervasive authoritarianism presents significant challenges to

any efforts towards democratization and has left the Togolese people with limited avenues for political participation and expression.

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/>.
- [Africa - Recent upsurge in military coups - September 2023](#)

External Links

- Copyright, sources and definitions: Background country information - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/wwl-background/>
- Copyright, sources and definitions: Persecution dynamics - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/country-dossiers/>
- Persecution engines description: 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index - <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024/index/tgo>
- Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.00 points): Freedom in the World 2024 Togo - <https://freedomhouse.org/country/togo/freedom-world/2024>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: USDS, 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/togo/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: several regions - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/17/togo-submission-un-committee-rights-child>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: HRW, 1 April 2003 - <https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/04/01/borderline-slavery/child-trafficking-togo>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report - Togo - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/togo/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: forcibly recruited - <https://www.voanews.com/a/togo-experts-aim-to-prevent-islamist-insurgents-from-recruiting-youth-/6657400.html>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: (HRW, 1 April 2003). - <https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/04/01/borderline-slavery/child-trafficking-togo>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2023 Togo - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/togo/>
- Further useful reports: Africa - Recent upsurge in military coups - September 2023 - <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/reports/africa-recent-upsurge-in-military-coups>