



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Mauritania



Christian Population: 8,500 (0.2 %) Evangelical Witness: 2,100 (0.05%)
Total Population: 3,365,700 Muslims: 3,357,260 (99.7%)
19 people groups - 74% unreached

Faith at Constant Risk

For Christians in Mauritania, public worship carries a constant threat. Even churches that are largely tolerated have to be careful so they aren't accused of proselytizing Muslims, and for Christians who converted from Islam, public worship is often impossible. In Mauritania's tribal culture, leaving Islam is not only religious betrayal, but also betrayal of the tribe and family. Believers from Muslim backgrounds will often keep their faith secret. Because the extended family is often necessary for survival, it is a huge risk for a Mauritanian to become a Christian. If their faith is discovered, they may lose not only their status in their community but also their citizenship.

Conversion from Islam is also illegal. Criticism of Islam in this northwestern African nation can carry the death penalty, though this law has been largely symbolic so far. For these reasons, public and collective acts of worship are particularly difficult. Christian migrants from sub-Saharan Africa or aid workers who make any expression of faith risk being prosecuted for attempted proselytization. Baptisms must often be carried out in secret. Mauritania may be an increasingly dangerous place for Christians, as there is fear radical Islam may be on the rise.

Mauritania rose one point and one rank on the 2020 World Watch List compared to 2019. The total score increased slightly due to an increase in the scores for pressure, showing how hostile against Christianity Mauritanian society has become. Mauritania's low score for violence may well be due to a lack of reporting that makes its way outside the closed country.

How Christians Are Suffering

Christian persecution is threefold in Mauritania. Collective acts of worship are particularly difficult for Christians due to the restrictive environment that makes it impossible for believers (especially converts from Islam) to openly meet and hold worship services. Any expression of faith by non-Mauritanian Christians (such as migrants from sub-Saharan Africa or aid workers) also carries the risk of being perceived as attempted proselytization of Muslims and leads to prosecution. Family and societal pressure is especially intense for Christians with a Muslim background. And Christians also face the risk of attacks from militant groups such as al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (Northwest Africa).

Examples

Baptisms can only be carried out in secret and many converts from Islam are reluctant to be baptized, fearing discovery and charges of apostasy being brought against them.

Converts that are discovered by their families often feel pressured into leaving the country.

All churches must operate carefully to avoid accusations of proselytization.

Pray for Mauritania

- Amnesty International reports that "arbitrary arrests and detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and the systematic ban of peaceful gatherings are commonplace in Mauritania, exacerbated by the authorities' denials." Pray President Ghazouani and his regime answers calls to prioritize respect for all human rights.
- According to Al Jazeera, hundreds of thousands of people are at risk of going hungry in the coming year in Mauritania and Senegal due to a lack of crops. Pray that people are spared from famine. Pray that Christians are not discriminated against and are able to get aid.
- Baptisms can only be carried out in secret and many converts from Islam are reluctant to be baptized, fearing discovery and charges of apostasy.
- The overall political, economic and social situation in Mauritania makes the country conducive for the rise of radical Islam. Pray against an insurgency and that these radical Islamists would come to know the Savior they persecute.