



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Turkmenistan



Total Population: 5,176,500

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: ca. 1,8 %

Evangelical Witness: ca. 0.0%

Muslim: 96%

A Dictatorship Always Watching

Turkmenistan is wholly ruled by its president, who seeks to tightly control every aspect of daily life, including religious worship. While most citizens are Muslim, their affiliation is largely cultural rather than devoutly religious-the government mostly seeks to build a cult of personality around its president. Christian gatherings are monitored, printing Christian materials is illegal, and unregistered churches risk constant raids and jail time for congregants and church leaders.

Ever since a new law on religion was introduced in April 2016, Christians have experienced tighter controls on church life. Police, secret services and local authorities monitor religious activities and regularly attend church services. Even Sunday services of Russian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches may be monitored.

The persecution score for Turkmenistan is up by one point, and the rank is increased by one. The pressure in the family and church spheres of life increased. The violence score, though very low, also increased.

How Christians Are Suffering

In this former Soviet republic, it's very common for members of Protestant churches to be regarded as followers of an alien sect aiming to depose the government-reinforcing the state's need to control and eradicate Christians. Indigenous Muslims who convert to Christianity are most persecuted, including pressure and occasional physical violence from families, friends and local community attempting to force them to return to their former faith. Some converts are even locked up by their families for long periods of time, beaten and may eventually be expelled from their communities. In areas where churches have not been registered, Christians suffer repeatedly from acts of Christian persecution, including police raids, threats, arrests and fines.

Examples

In November 2018, a female convert to Christianity was called to the police station where she was interrogated about Christian literature and meetings in her home. She was threatened with arrest.

Church activities are often interfered with and hindered by families of converts, the local Muslim community and the local authorities.

Pray for Turkmenistan

- Pray for protection of the house churches in Turkmenistan. Secret house churches are increasingly the targets of police and authorities. In most areas, public worship is out of the question. Pray believers find ways to gather together and encourage each other.
- Evangelizing is a punishable offense in the country. Pray for both boldness and discernment to share the gospel despite the legal consequences.
- Turkmenistan is considered to be one of the most restrictive countries in the world. Pray for increased freedoms in the country.
- Pray for believers that have converted from Islam and now experience fierce pressure to return to Islam. Pray for protection and endurance.