



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Colombia

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



Total Population: 50,882,891

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 95% – **Evangelical Witness: 3.5%**

Targeted for Faithful Resistance

Church leaders are harassed, extorted and even murdered by guerrillas or other criminal groups. This violence is often the direct result of Christians working for the defense of human rights or supporting a peace agreement that would restrict illegal activities of militant groups. The violence may also stem from Christians who work for environmental rights, working with youth or who denounce corruption and violence. In indigenous communities, there is a significant opposition toward Christian missionaries and indigenous converts, who, as a result, face imprisonment, physical abuse and the confiscation of property, among other forms of punishment. In addition, because of rising secularism, there is an increasing intolerance to Christian references and religious opinions in the public sphere-especially about issues concerning life, family, marriage and religious liberty-because they are considered discriminatory and "hate speech."

Colombia rose six spots in the 2020 World Watch List from 2019. This is primarily due to increased pressure from criminal and ethnic groups and the increase in the number of Christians killed and church buildings attacked.

How Christians Are Suffering

Church leaders are being threatened, harassed, extorted and even murdered as a result of the violence perpetrated by guerrillas or other criminal groups who are often protected due to corruption of the local authorities. Sometimes the violence is directed toward the church leaders' families and entire communities to discourage anyone wanting to convert to Christianity.

Christians are also ridiculed when they attempt to participate in public debate especially concerning gender, marriage and abortion. Political parties and ordinary citizens reject faith-based opinions and try to enforce agendas that contradict Christian values. Indigenous people who convert to Christianity and missionaries risk imprisonment, torture and the confiscation of property.

Examples

In August 2019, the Constitutional Court ruled that the scope of protection for the respect of Christian public personalities is not guaranteed in the same way as for those exercising the right to freedom of expression to criticize them. According to the ruling, freedom of expression must be protected even if the expressions aired diminish the reputation of Christians, just because they are publicly known. This ruling has affected one Christian YouTuber and a pastor.

According to Open Doors sources, in March 2019 an indigenous community in northern Colombia arrested a young woman because of her Christian beliefs. The leaders aimed to force her to marry an indigenous man in order to prevent the spread of the Christian faith inside the indigenous community.

Pray for Colombia

- Pray for Christian communities in areas with a high guerrilla presence, such as Catatumbo, Arauca, Cauca and Guaviare, as there have been more incidents of religious persecution in the past 10 years.
- Pray that the church will remain strong in the midst of violent scenarios, that the preaching of the Word will not cease, and that the violent will be led to repentance.
- According to the Open Doors Colombia research department, more than half of the believers in rural areas of conflict zones are threatened with death, extortion, bans on evangelism and constant surveillance. May God strengthen all those who follow the gospel, even in the most hostile circumstances.
- Pray for discernment and wisdom for the leaders of tribal Christian churches who face persecution, torture, imprisonment and violence every day.