



# PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

## Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Oman

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: 5,106,626

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 3% – **Evangelical Witness: 0.4%**

Muslim: 89%

### Increased Monitoring and Restrictions

Converts from Islam to Christianity are put under pressure from family and society to recant their faith. They can be expelled from the family home and from their jobs, and face problems with the government. In this highly conservative society, it is especially difficult for Muslim women to choose to follow Christ.

Oman is one of the few countries where Islam is the state religion, but where conversion is not a crime as long as it is not done publicly. Yet there are consequences, especially on issues related to family matters, and converts from Islam face persecution in their private life. According to the US State Department's International Religious Freedom report for 2018: "Members of religious minorities reported conversion from Islam was viewed extremely negatively within the Muslim community," which explains why a convert will be ostracized by her or his family. Given the tribal culture, ostracization means a convert will lose all social status and security normally provided by the family.

Expatriate Christian meetings are sometimes monitored for political activity. All religious organizations must register with the government, and monitoring of Christians and their activities has intensified from the 2019 to the 2020 reporting period.

Oman rose two rankings the 2019 World Watch List. This is primarily because of the increased scrutiny the Omani government has placed on the church, along with better reporting and sourcing within Oman.

### How Christians Are Suffering

Because leaving Islam for Christianity is seen as a betrayal of both family and tribe, converts from Islam to Christianity face pressure from family and society to recant their faith. In this Arabian Peninsula country, believers often face Christian persecution including being shunned by their families and expelled from their homes and jobs. They can also encounter problems over child custody and inheritance. All religious organizations must be registered with the authorities. Expatriate Christian communities are tolerated, but their facilities are restricted and Christian meetings are monitored, with authorities recording what's said and noting if any nationals are in attendance.

### Examples

Public proselytizing is forbidden; it can only be done privately. Reportedly, some converts and expatriate Christians involved in proselytization were called in for questioning in the 2020 World Watch List reporting period.

Non-Muslim religious groups must register with the government which then approves and controls the leasing of building to such groups.

Female Christian domestic workers are likely to be particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse because of their faith.

### Pray for Oman

- Proselytizing can only be done behind closed doors. Pray Christians will continue to share the gospel no matter the cost.
- Local imams encourage the upholding of the cultural norms, which are intertwined with Islamic principles. Pray believers have wisdom and discernment on how to navigate potential conflicts.
- All state school curricula include instruction in Islam. Christians or other non-Muslims are not obliged to take the Islamic teaching courses. However, converts who do not want to reveal their new Christian faith for safety reasons will still be required to take the Islamic teaching. Pray Christian parents know how to best guide their children in their education.