

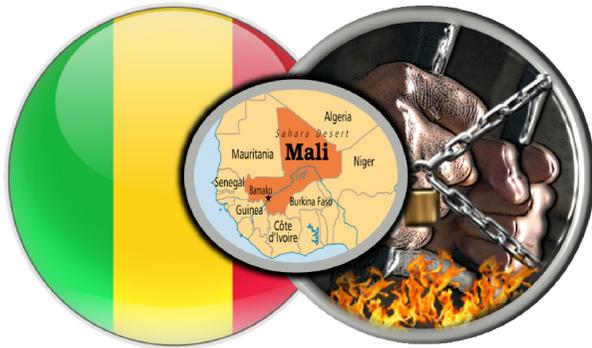


PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in MALI

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: 20,250,833

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 3% – **Evangelical Witness: 0,4%**

Death Rate: 9,01/1000 per year: Just today: 500

51 People Massacred by Jihadists in Mali

08/10/2021 Mali (International Christian Concern) -At least 51 people were killed by Islamic militants on Sunday during village raids in Mali, said a district administrator.

"Houses were ransacked and burned to the ground and herds of livestock carried away, said the administrator's note, which was seen by Reuters."

According to the Daily Sun, the villages ransacked included Karou, Ouatagouna and Daoutegeft near Mali's border with Niger.

"(They) massacred everyone," a military officer told AFP International.

Open Doors listed Mali as the 28th most dangerous country in the world to be a Christian. Islamic extremists have been able to overtake areas with weak governmental leadership and have capitalized on vulnerabilities created by COVID-19. Since a coup attempt in 2012, jihadists have had control over much of northern Mali and have been able to recruit and train their insurgents there.

How are Christians persecuted in Mali?

When Islamic extremist groups took control of the northern part of Mali in 2012, churches were burned down and Christians forced to flee. The displacement that happened still affects Christians who lost their homes and whose churches were destroyed. Although some Christians and congregations have returned to the north under police protection, they still live under the threat of attack by Islamic militants.

Evangelistic activities in the north are especially risky and could lead to attacks from Islamic extremists. Christian missionaries operating in Mali also live under the constant threat of abduction and some have indeed been kidnapped by jihadists. Christians from a Muslim background are particularly vulnerable to violence (especially in the north) and pressure from their relatives and family.

Even in the south of the country, where Christians enjoy more religious freedom, threats from Islamic extremist groups have increased. Additionally, the coup in late summer 2020 continued Mali's political upheaval, leaving the door open for extremist elements to take root in places without strong leadership. Extremists have also used the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic to assert more control in some parts of Mali, one of Africa's poorest countries. As these groups often particularly target Christians, this is a worrying trend, though it remains to be seen what the country's interim leadership will mean for religious freedom.

Meet Naomi'

"More than once, my family sent jihadists to my house to kill us. One day, my husband was gunned down." Naomi

What's life like for Christians in Mali?

Believers from a Muslim background are particularly vulnerable to rejection and intimidation from their families. Like Naomi, who had to flee her home in the north after her husband was murdered, and lived in a camp for internally displaced people in Bamako, Mali's capital. She was there for several years - but your prayers and support meant that Open Doors partners were able to find her a home when the camp closed. She still faces persecution from her Muslim neighbours and some family members but, wonderfully, in the past year three of her sisters have stopped opposing her and have become Christians themselves! "I never retaliated or drove them out of my home. Instead, I showed them love. The love we showed them has won them over to Christ," says Naomi.

Naomi even has godly love for her neighbours who persecute her: "I am a Christian, I have to show love even to the worst of my enemies. Who knows, I may draw them to Christ despite their attitude towards me. Christians are people who love their enemies - their haters - as brothers. That is how we can win them for the kingdom."