

World
Watch
Research

Angola: Full Country Dossier

February 2022



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

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Introduction

World Watch List 2022

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018
1	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	15.0	98	94	93	94	93
2	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	13.1	96	94	94	94	94
3	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.5	91	92	92	91	91
4	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.2	16.3	11.5	91	92	90	87	86
5	Yemen	16.7	16.6	16.5	16.7	16.7	5.2	88	87	85	86	85
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.6	11.1	88	88	87	86	86
7	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.3	14.5	14.4	16.7	87	85	80	80	77
8	Pakistan	13.6	14.0	15.1	14.9	13.1	16.7	87	88	88	87	86
9	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.6	15.8	16.5	10.4	85	86	85	85	85
10	India	12.7	12.7	12.9	14.7	13.3	15.6	82	83	83	83	81
11	Saudi Arabia	15.1	15.1	15.0	15.9	16.7	3.1	81	78	79	77	79
12	Myanmar	12.4	11.5	13.8	13.4	13.1	14.8	79	74	73	71	65
13	Sudan	13.4	13.4	14.3	13.6	15.7	8.5	79	79	85	87	87
14	Iraq	14.0	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	6.9	78	82	76	79	86
15	Syria	12.9	13.8	13.5	14.3	13.9	9.3	78	81	82	82	76
16	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.7	15.8	16.5	0.4	77	77	78	78	78
17	China	12.6	9.8	12.2	14.4	15.5	11.1	76	74	70	65	57
18	Qatar	14.2	14.1	11.1	13.0	14.3	7.2	74	67	66	62	63
19	Vietnam	11.3	9.7	12.7	14.1	14.5	8.7	71	72	72	70	69
20	Egypt	12.7	13.2	11.5	12.7	10.8	10.0	71	75	76	76	70
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	14.1	11.8	15.6	1.7	71	71	73	74	73
22	Algeria	14.0	14.0	11.1	13.4	14.1	4.1	71	70	73	70	58
23	Mauritania	14.3	13.9	13.1	14.0	14.1	0.9	70	71	68	67	57
24	Mali	9.4	8.2	13.9	10.3	12.8	15.0	70	67	66	68	59
25	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	13.3	15.7	0.6	69	70	70	69	68
26	Laos	12.0	10.3	13.2	13.3	14.1	5.9	69	71	72	71	67
27	Morocco	13.1	13.8	10.8	12.8	14.2	3.9	69	67	66	63	51
28	Indonesia	11.3	11.5	11.5	11.0	9.6	13.5	68	63	60	65	59
29	Bangladesh	11.8	10.7	12.9	11.3	10.2	11.3	68	67	63	58	58
30	Colombia	11.5	8.8	13.1	11.0	9.9	13.3	68	67	62	58	56
31	CAR	9.0	8.6	13.6	9.6	11.4	15.6	68	66	68	70	61
32	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.0	9.6	12.1	14.8	68	67	66	48	-
33	Niger	9.4	9.5	13.9	7.2	12.8	14.8	68	62	60	52	45
34	Bhutan	13.4	12.4	11.7	13.7	13.8	1.7	67	64	61	64	62
35	Tunisia	11.9	12.7	10.6	11.3	13.4	6.5	66	67	64	63	62
36	Oman	13.8	14.0	10.3	13.2	13.4	1.5	66	63	62	59	57
37	Cuba	12.3	8.1	12.6	13.2	14.0	5.9	66	62	52	49	49
38	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.3	12.3	9.8	66	65	63	65	62
39	Jordan	12.9	14.0	11.0	12.3	12.5	3.0	66	64	64	65	66
40	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	12.0	15.6	66	64	56	55	33
41	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	11.3	7.9	12.5	15.6	65	63	43	43	-
42	Turkey	12.6	11.5	11.4	13.2	11.6	4.6	65	69	63	66	62
43	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	10.8	10.3	12.6	65	64	60	61	59
44	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.4	65	64	60	54	38
45	Tajikistan	13.8	12.3	12.0	12.6	13.2	0.7	65	66	65	65	65
46	Brunei	14.8	14.5	10.3	11.0	13.2	0.6	64	64	63	63	64
47	Kazakhstan	13.4	11.6	11.1	12.6	13.5	1.7	64	64	64	63	63
48	Nepal	12.4	9.8	9.9	13.6	12.7	5.2	64	66	64	64	64
49	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	63	62	60	61
50	Malaysia	12.5	14.3	11.5	11.6	10.2	3.3	63	63	62	60	65

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018
51	Kenya	11.7	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	11.1	63	62	61	61	62
52	Sri Lanka	12.9	9.9	11.4	11.3	9.4	7.8	63	62	65	58	57
53	Comoros	12.7	11.1	11.2	12.4	14.2	0.9	63	62	57	56	56
54	UAE	13.4	13.6	10.1	11.8	12.2	1.3	62	62	60	58	58
55	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	13.7	61	58	55	52	53
56	Azerbaijan	13.1	9.9	9.3	11.0	13.4	3.3	60	56	57	57	57
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.4	9.8	10.2	12.0	0.9	59	58	60	57	60
58	Djibouti	12.3	12.3	11.1	10.0	12.2	0.7	59	56	56	56	56
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.1	11.1	10.4	12.0	1.5	58	58	57	56	54
60	Bahrain	12.5	13.2	9.1	11.1	10.2	0.9	57	56	55	55	57
61	Nicaragua	9.1	5.6	11.1	11.8	11.3	7.6	56	51	41	41	-
62	Russian Federation	12.3	8.0	10.2	10.6	12.3	2.2	56	57	60	60	51
63	Chad	11.5	8.2	10.2	9.6	10.3	5.6	55	53	56	48	40
64	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.7	9.2	9.6	8.1	52	48	48	43	-
65	Venezuela	5.6	4.5	11.2	9.4	11.1	9.6	51	39	42	41	34
66	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	10.1	11.4	7.8	51	46	43	42	-
67	Rwanda	8.1	5.5	6.7	10.3	10.1	9.3	50	42	42	41	-
68	Honduras	7.2	5.1	10.5	7.7	9.2	8.7	48	46	39	38	-
69	Uganda	8.1	4.6	7.4	6.7	9.1	11.7	48	47	48	47	46
70	El Salvador	7.7	4.6	10.7	5.7	9.1	7.2	45	42	38	30	-
71	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	9.8	2.4	44	43	41	42	-
72	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.3	8.8	1.7	44	43	43	43	-
73	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	7.0	8.1	2.0	43	47	45	46	-
74	South Sudan	5.7	0.9	7.0	6.3	7.8	15.0	43	43	44	44	-
75	Ivory Coast	9.8	8.6	8.2	5.5	7.9	2.0	42	42	42	43	-
76	Israel	9.8	8.4	5.6	6.6	6.6	4.3	41	40	38	39	40

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Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the “Keys to Understanding” chapter under the heading “Links for general background information”. Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2022 reporting period was 1 October 2020 - 30 September 2021.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

Effect on data-gathering during COVID-19 pandemic

In the WWL 2022 reporting period, travel restrictions and other measures introduced by the governments of various countries to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic did cause delays and create the need for restructuring grass-roots research in some cases. Through the agile cooperation of In-country networks, Open Doors country researchers, External experts, WWR analysts and an increased use of technological options, Open Doors is confident that – as in the previous reporting period – WWL 2022 scoring, analysis and documentation has maintained required levels of quality and reliability.

External Links - Introduction

- Sources and definitions: World Watch List Documentation - <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>

WWL 2022 Situation in brief / Angola

Brief country details

Angola: Population (UN estimate for 2021)	Christians	Chr%
33,894,000	31,634,000	93.3

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

Angola: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	51	66
WWL 2021	46	68
WWL 2020	43	68
WWL 2019	42	69
WWL 2018	-	-

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2018-2022 reporting periods

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Angola: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials, Organized crime cartels or networks
Organized corruption and crime	Government officials, Organized crime cartels or networks
Christian denominational protectionism	Religious leaders of other churches

Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.

Brief description of the persecution situation

Christians in Angola face difficulties in a variety of ways. First of all, the government has not given official recognition to any new churches since 2004. Secondly, as a result of this, many churches are operating illegally, causing Christians to fear possible arrest or demolition of their churches. Thirdly, the government is also creating an unfavorable environment by publicly stating that religious sects are a cause for concern.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- Christians who are not part of a registered church cannot freely engage in evangelism and collective worship.
- Arrest by the government without due process
- Church demolitions/closure.
- Continual denial of recognition for new places of worship, due to unrealistic requirements (see below: *Religious landscape*).

WWL 2022: Keys to understanding / Angola

Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International country report	AI 2021	https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/southern-africa/angola/	16 September 2021
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13036732	16 September 2021
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2020	BTI 2020	https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/AGO	16 September 2021
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/angola/	16 September 2021
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2020	EIU 2020	https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf	16 September 2021
FFP's Fragile States Index 2021	FSI 2021	https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/	16 September 2021
Freedom House's 2021 Democracy index (Not included)	Freedom House/Democracy 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores	
Freedom House's 2021 Global Freedom index	Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/country/angola/freedom-world/2021	16 September 2021
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2020 report	Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020	https://freedomhouse.org/country/angola/freedom-net/2020	16 September 2021
Garda World country report	Garda World	https://www.garda.com/crisis24/country-reports/angola	16 September 2021
Human Rights Watch World Report 2021	HRW 2021	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/angola	16 September 2021
Internet World Stats 2021	IWS 2021	https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#a0	16 September 2021
RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index	World Press Freedom 2020	https://rsf.org/en/angola	16 September 2021
Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index	CPI 2020	https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/ago	16 September 2021
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators	HDI	http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/AGO	16 September 2021
US State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom country reports	IRFR 2020	https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/angola/	16 September 2021
USCIRF 2021 country reports (Not included)	USCIRF 2021	https://www.uscifr.gov/countries	
World Bank country report	World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/angola	16 September 2021

Recent history

Angola is in southern Africa bordered by Namibia in the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the north, Zambia to the east and by the Atlantic Ocean in the west. It declared independence from Portugal on 11 November 1975 after a struggle of more than thirty years. Angola is well-known for the 27 year long civil war (1975-2002) which followed independence. At the height of the Cold War, the battle for Angola became a proxy war between the West and the Communist

bloc.

In fact, the civil war had begun even before independence was gained in 1975 and was caused mainly by ideological differences among the factions who were fighting for independence. The factions were:

- The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA - right wing);
- The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA - socialist);
- The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA - anti-socialist).

With Cuban and Eastern bloc assistance, the MPLA was able to defeat the FNLA, but the members of UNITA (later supported by the USA) continued to wage a war against the socialist government. However, control by the government of areas outside the cities was slight. The devastating effect of the war left the country on the brink of complete disintegration. In 1990, UNITA recognized the legitimacy of the MPLA government as a transitional one, the MPLA formally renounced Marxist-Leninism in favor of Social Democracy, and in 1991 the two parties were able to arrive at a settlement and signed The Bicesse Accords in Portugal. A new constitution was agreed upon and multi-party elections were scheduled to take place under the supervision of the United Nations. Elections were held in 1992 and the MPLA won. UNITA rejected the result and went back to war. In 2002, the leader of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, was killed in an ambush, and the civil war ended with a victory for MPLA. (Source: [South African History Online](#), accessed 30 September 2020)

President Dos Santos came to power in 1979 and ruled with an iron fist. In August 2017, after 40 years in power, Santos finally stepped down and his right-hand man won the presidential elections amid accusations of irregularities. João Lourenço assumed office in September 2017 but there was little hope of any major policy changes, although he did make some progress in reducing corruption. For instance: In August 2019, the government [arrested and sentenced](#) a former minister to 14 years imprisonment on corruption charges (Bloomberg, 15 August 2019). In 2019 and 2020, there was little progress in terms of human rights even though the current president is clearly more [open to reforms](#) than his predecessor (ISS, April 2020). Just like any other country, the COVID-19 crisis also shaped Angola's politics, economy and social life in 2020 and 2021.

Political and legal landscape

The country went through some devastating phases after gaining independence. It is a presidential republic, with the president acting both as head of state and head of government. Theoretically, the country moved to a multi-party system following the 1992 elections. However, as in many other Sub-Saharan countries, elections in Angola only bear a façade of institutional democracy. Angola is one of the prime examples where a national liberation movement has taken over as the dominant ruling party. While the first ever local elections scheduled for 2020 were [postponed indefinitely](#) due mainly to the COVID-19 crisis, (21Votes, accessed 25 February 2021), [national and presidential elections](#) are scheduled to take place in August 2022 (Global Voices, 1 February 2022).

According to Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021:

- Freedom House categorizes Angola as 'not free' both in civil liberties and political rights. Freedom of expression, freedom of association and other human rights are curtailed by the ruling party: "Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, the state owns the only daily newspaper and national radio station, as well as the main television stations. These outlets, along with private media owned by senior officials and members of the Dos Santos family (former president), act as mouthpieces for MPLA; censorship and self-censorship are common."
- In 2020, the government privatized a number of outlets they said were owned by members of the political and military elite but funded by the state. Journalists' groups expressed concern about a lack of transparency regarding the privatization.

Angola is a secular state with a Christian majority. Constitutionally speaking, freedom of religion is respected. Article 10 (section 2) of the [2010 Constitution](#) states: "The state shall recognize and respect the different religious faiths, which shall be free to organize and exercise their activities, provided that they abide by the constitution and the laws of The Republic of Angola" (Constitute Project, accessed 30 September 2020). Article 41 also provides for freedom of conscience, religion, and worship, and recognizes the right to conscientious objection. Article 41, section 4 states that "no authority shall question anyone with regard to their convictions or religious practices, except to gather statistical data that cannot be individually identified".

However, these well-articulated constitutional guarantees are restricted by the actions of the government. Many church leaders have applied for registration for their churches and have been waiting for over ten years. Without registration, it is illegal to operate schools, clinics and other social services. Christians have thus found it difficult to congregate and many churches face demolition. In November 2018, thousands of churches were [facing forced closure](#) (World Watch Monitor, 14 November 2018).

In the current political environment in which the government opposes the free operation of civil society (including religious institutions), Christians face restricted freedom both collectively and individually. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW 2021):

- "During 2020, Angolan authorities struggled to contain abuses by state security forces implicated in killings and excessive use of force against unarmed people who allegedly violated COVID-19 restrictions."
- "There was progress in respecting the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, allowing several protests and marches across the country. But the crackdown on peaceful protesters and activists in the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda continued. Angolan authorities continued forced evictions and demolitions without the necessary procedural guarantees or the provision of alternative adequate housing, even during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The government approved the country's long-awaited human rights strategy, making human rights an issue of state security."

Religious landscape

Angola: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	31,634,000	93.3
Muslim	392,000	1.2
Hindu	470	0.0
Buddhist	2,200	0.0
Ethno-religionist	1,577,000	4.7
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	2,800	0.0
Atheist	51,900	0.2
Agnostic	234,000	0.7
Other	200	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2020):

- "There are 81 recognized religious groups and more than 1,100 unrecognized religious groups. The government has not recognized any new religious groups since passage of a 2004 law that required religious groups to have at least 100,000 citizens as members. On May 14 2019, a new law reduced the requirement to 60,000 but added several other requirements, including a mandate that 1,000 members reside in each of the country's 18 provinces. The government also transferred the adjudication authority to the Ministry of Culture from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights."
- In March 2020, the government detained more than two dozen religious leaders and worshippers in several towns for violating a ban prohibiting all large gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In April, religious organizations formed an ecumenical task force to advise government policy for combatting COVID-19. In September, the government issued a decree stating that only legally recognized religious groups could hold services on a limited basis under continued COVID restrictions. In September, leaders from the Islamic community responded by saying these restrictions violated their constitutional rights. Subsequently, the government liberalized religious restrictions to better accommodate Islamic Friday prayers.

Christians, who have been asking for better legal protection and recognition, will most likely continue to be ignored by the authorities.

Economic landscape

According to [World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook 2020](#):

- **Economic growth:** "Angola experienced a fifth consecutive year of recession in 2020, as GDP contracted by an estimated 4 percent. Non-oil activity dropped sharply in the second quarter of 2020 as measures to halt the spread of COVID-19 restricted in-person service provision. Angola's crude oil production declined 7.1 percent in 2020, standing at 1.28 million barrels per day. Year-on-year, it is estimated that both oil and non-oil activity contracted by 7.2 and 3.1 percent respectively. However, a partial recovery is expected in 2021, with GDP projected to grow by 0.9 percent and accelerating to 3.5 percent in 2022."
- **Currency depreciation/inflation:** "In the context of the oil price decline and heightened debt vulnerabilities, the currency lost 37.6 percent of its value vis-à-vis the USD in 2020. Re-profiling of the external debt obligations and the oil price recovery since late 2020 have provided some relief but the lagged effect of exchange rate depreciation is adding to inflation. With the pass-through from currency depreciation, inflation accelerated to 25.1 percent in 2020 (from 16.9 percent in 2019). However, inflation is expected to retreat gradually as the lagged impact of rapid currency depreciation between 2018 and 2020 wanes."
- **COVID-19:** "Angola's transition to a more diversified, private-sector led growth model has become even more urgent in the face of COVID-19. Although the spread of the pandemic in Angola has been limited (124 cases per 100,000 adults as of February 2021, compared to 427 cases on average for Sub-Saharan Africa), non-oil activity dropped sharply in the second quarter of 2020 as measures to curtail the spread of the pandemic restricted in-person service provision, while low oil prices, reduced OPEC quotas, and logistical disruptions took a toll on the oil sector. Export revenues (in US dollars) declined by 37.3 percent in 2020 mainly driven by the decline in the volume and value of oil. The current account remained in balance even though imports declined by 23.3 percent. Prices for food, much of it imported, rose faster (by 31.4 percent) affecting urban households who are particularly vulnerable to price shocks due to high unemployment rates and low subsistence production, with purchased food accounting for 44 percent of their expenditures. Due to price hikes, high unemployment, food insecurity and limited social safety nets in the face of the pandemic, the poverty rate increased astronomically. To address some of these concerns, the government prioritized spending on health (which increased to 40 percent) and social protection, and introduced the Kwenda cash transfer program to reduce poverty and inequality, especially in rural areas where the poverty rates are substantially higher. Projections, tentative due to limited data, suggest that the share of the population living on less than \$1.90 per day (2011 PPP) will continue increasing in 2021, reaching about 54 percent, signifying an increase of 2 million people since 2019. Another million may fall into poverty by 2023 before the poverty rate starts to decline."

According to the [African Development Bank Group](#) (accessed 2 July 2021):

- To promote macro-economic stability, private investment, and more diversified economy, major reforms were introduced over the past two years – including a value-added tax, a fiscal responsibility law, a liberalization of the exchange rate regime, and a private

investment and privatization law.

Social and cultural landscape

According to the UNDP Human Development Indicators (HDI 2020) and CIA Factbook:

- **Main ethnic groups:** Ovimbundu (37 %), Kimbundu (25%), Bakongo (13 %), Mestico i.e mixed European and native African (2%), European (1%), other (22%)
- **Main languages:** Portuguese 71.2% (official), Umbundu 23%, Kikongo 8.2% Kimbundu 7.8%, Chokwe 6.5 %, Nihaneca 3.4 %, Nganguela 3.1 %, Fiote 2.4 %, Kwanhama 2.3 %, Muhumbi 2.1%, Luvale 1%, other 3.6%
- **Population growth:** 3.38% (2021 est.)
- **Urban population:** 67.5% of the total population (2021)
- **Rate of urbanization:** 4.04% annual rate of change (2020-2025 est.)
- **Literacy rate, adult (ages 15 and older):** 66.0%
- **Expected years of schooling:** 11.8 years
- **Employment to population ratio (ages 15 and older):** 72.2%
- **Unemployment, total:** 6.9% of labor force
- **Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24):** 16.09%
- **Human Development Index score and rank:** Angola ranked 148th out of 189 countries with a score of 0.581
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 61.1 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.903
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** 0.536

According to [UNHCR](#) data (2021):

- **Refugees:** As of 31 May 2021, there were approximately 25,941 refugees and 30,294 asylum-seekers resident in the Luanda, Huambo, Bengo, Zaire, and Uige provinces of Angola. Furthermore, the outbreak of violence in the Kasai region of the DRC in March 2017 triggered the displacement of over 35,000 refugees into Lunda Norte Province.

According to FFP's Fragile State Index (FSI 2021):

- Angola ranked 34th out of 178 countries, scoring 89.0 points. It is a country where cronyism, clientelism and nepotism are rampant. As a result, the magnitude of corruption in the country is high and the lack of rule of law and lack of good governance are prevalent.

According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2020):

- Angola is a country where corruption is rampant and thus ranked 142nd out of 180 countries (with a score of 27).

According to Heritage Foundation's [2021 Index of Economic Freedom](#):

- Angola scored 54.2 points, ranking 140th out of a total of 171 scored countries. Angola is ranked 30th among 47 countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and its overall score is slightly below the regional average and well below the world average.

- "Angola's economy made further progress, reinforcing its escape from the ranks of the repressed in 2019. Nevertheless, GDP growth has been stagnant or negative for the past five years, and the country's economic prospects remain poor. Burdensome regulations, restrictions, and weak institutions are barriers to entry both for informal workers and for International investors. For Angola to begin making real strides toward greater economic freedom, the government will have to address severe failings in the country's rule of law and also make substantial progress in the areas of investment freedom and financial freedom."

Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2021):

- **Internet usage:** 26.5% of the population – survey date December 2020
- **Facebook usage:** 7.7% of the population – survey date June 2021

According to World Bank (country profile):

- **Mobile phone subscriptions:** 46.6 per 100 people

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (updated 20 April 2020):

- "The government has aimed to develop telecom infrastructure in a bid to diversify the country's economy and lessen its dependence on offshore crude oil production, which accounts for almost all exports and up to 80% of tax revenue. By extending and upgrading telecom networks the government expects businesses to become more efficient and for e-commerce to become a more prominent feature of economic growth. In addition, networks will facilitate rural access to education and health care. However, there is much progress to be made if the country is to improve the business climate and attract investors."

Angola is advanced in mining industry technology as it is one of the richest countries in minerals, especially diamonds. However, the country is not as well-advanced as it could be in other areas, considering the available funds for investment. High costs remain a big hindrance for many Angolans in the field of communication technology. Access to the Internet is low but has been growing steadily.

According to Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020:

- The government and some private companies have made some efforts to establish free wireless hotspots in rural areas.
- The government still controls all information and communications technology through direct or indirect participation. For example, the state-owned oil company Sonangol exerts some kind of control on the Information and communications technology sector by owning some shares in the internet and mobile service providers.
- Internet freedom has improved under the leadership of President Joao Lourenco: "Despite a history of censorship in print and broadcast media, there have been no known incidents of the government blocking or filtering online content in Angola, and there are no restrictions on the type of information that can be exchanged through digital media

technologies."

- "The government in March 2020, issued a decree ordering state-run and private media outlets to collaborate with public agencies as part of Angola's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, raising concerns of media manipulation. A new law introduced in May 2021 significantly expanded the government's legal authority to conduct electronic surveillance, including through spyware and telecommunications interception technology, with minimal safeguards".

Security situation

The country was embroiled in civil war for almost three decades until 2002. Human security remains a major problem due to the lack of rule of law in the country. In the Province of Cabinda, there has been fighting between government security forces and the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). In [January 2019](#) this also affected Christians and some were arrested (France24, 18 May 2019).

In 2020, human security was under serious threat due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were a series of COVID-19 enforcement measures and protests that led to the arrest and death of a number of Angolans. For instance, between May and July 2020, Amnesty International (AI 2021) reported that Angolan security forces killed dozens (including teenagers) while enforcing measures to curb the spread of the pandemic. Also in October 2020, [violent anti-government protests](#) in the capital city, Luanda, resulted in the arrest of at least 100 people who were demanding better living conditions and a new date for local government elections (Africa News, 26 October 2020).

Trends analysis

1) Since João Lourenço assumed office as president in September 2017 there have been no signs of any major policy changes

Since João Lourenço took over the presidency in September 2017, the human rights record remains poor and corruption is still rampant. This looks set to continue since the government in Angola is not ready to create space for civil society, genuine political parties and overall political reform. The laws put in place to restrict freedom of religion and assembly have made church registration difficult. The harassment of political opponents and journalists is common. In this environment, it is very difficult to see freedom of religion - especially for non-traditional Christian groups - being upheld in the near future. What has changed is that in May 2019 the new law reduced the 100,000 member registration requirement to 60,000, but added several other requirements, including a mandate that 1,000 members reside in each of the country's 18 provinces. This change has actually made it more difficult for churches to submit an application.

2) The government has intensified action against church groups

Christians, who have been asking for better legal protection and recognition for years, will most likely continue to be ignored. The government has also intensified its negative policies against church groups, particularly concerning registration. For example, in September 2020, the government issued a decree stating that only legally recognized religious groups could hold services on a limited basis under continued COVID restrictions. The government has shown its

intention to close the space for Christian communities by giving notice of closure for more than a thousand churches. Any attempt to get a license to operate in the country has been impossible since 2004 and these difficulties are more than likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Some even suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has given the government another route to target some churches.

External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: South African History Online - <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/angolan-civil-war-1975-2002-brief-history>
- Recent history: arrested and sentenced - <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-08-15/angola-jails-most-senior-official-yet-after-corruption-trial>
- Recent history: open to reforms - <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/sar38.pdf>
- Political and legal landscape: postponed indefinitely - <https://21votes.com/angola-elections/>
- Political and legal landscape: national and presidential elections - <https://globalvoices.org/2022/02/01/in-an-election-year-press-freedom-declines-in-angola/>
- Political and legal landscape: 2010 Constitution - https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Angola_2010.pdf
- Political and legal landscape: facing forced closure - <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/coe/angola-2000-unregistered-churches-forced-to-close/>
- Economic landscape: World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook 2020: - <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/720441492455091991/mpo-ssa.pdf>
- Economic landscape: African Development Bank Group - <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/southern-africa/angola/angola-economic-outlook>
- Social and cultural landscape: UNHCR - <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ago>
- Social and cultural landscape: 2021 Index of Economic Freedom - <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/angola>
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Angola-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses>
- Security situation: January 2019 - <https://www.france24.com/en/20190518-angolas-oil-region-separatists-accuse-president-crackdown>
- Security situation: violent anti-government protests - <https://www.africanews.com/2020/10/26/angola-protest-in-luanda-against-corruption/>

WWL 2022: Church information / Angola

Christian origins

Christianity was introduced into Angola before colonization. In 1491, Roman Catholic priests from Portugal paved the way to establish mission stations in the country. In the 16th century, Henrique, the son of Manikongo Nzinga Alfonsa, became the first Sub-Saharan African to be consecrated as bishop. (King Alfonsa had ruled over the Kongo Empire from 1509-1543.) However, the fact that the Portuguese turned their main focus to the slave trade hindered the expansion of the Christian faith for a considerable time. In 1865, the Vatican decided to send the White Fathers to the country with a new assignment so that Christianity could regain the momentum that it had lost earlier (*Source: Encyclopedia of African History, 3-Volume set, pp.83-84.*)

Protestants arrived in 1878, when British Baptists started working among the Bakongo people near São Salvador. In 1880, missionaries with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions arrived to work among the Ovimbundu and were joined by Canadian Presbyterians

(now an integral part of the United Church of Canada) in 1886. In 1885 forty-five missionaries from the Methodist Episcopal Church arrived in Angola as one of the first efforts organized by the newly elected bishop, William Taylor. The Christian Brethren established their mission station in 1889. Anglicans established work in Angola early in the 20th century. The Pentecostal movement entered Angola in 1938, with initial efforts being made by the Church of God International.

(Source: Melton J.G. and Baumann M., eds.: *Religions of the World - A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices - 2nd edition, p.133.*)

Church spectrum today

Angola: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	0	0.0
Catholic	18,326,000	57.9
Protestant	9,305,000	29.4
Independent	2,138,000	6.8
Unaffiliated	2,136,000	6.8
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-271,000	-0.9
Total	31,634,000	100.0
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	5,755,000	18.2
Renewalist movement	8,450,000	26.7

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

Orthodox: Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox. **Roman Catholics:** All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. **Protestants:** Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world's 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics. **Independents:** Christians who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant). **Unaffiliated Christians:** Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches. **Doubly-affiliated Christians:** Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once. **Evangelical movement:** Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls. **Renewalist movement:** Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.

Christians are the majority in the country. There are major issues regarding the hostility shown by the main church denominations towards the smaller ones.

WWL 2022: Persecution Dynamics / Angola

Reporting period

1 October 2020 - 30 September 2021

Position on the World Watch List

Angola: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	51	66
WWL 2021	46	68
WWL 2020	43	68
WWL 2019	42	69
WWL 2018	-	-

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2018-2022 reporting periods

Angola rose 5 points in WWL 2022, which was mainly due to the fact that *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Christian denominational protectionism* work in tandem, putting more pressure on Christians who are denied licenses and registration. The irony is that *Dictatorial paranoia* also affects those churches working with the government to put pressure on other Christians groups. The main challenges faced by Christians are the laws and policies set out by the government, thus persecution is government-driven. Church leaders who speak out against government practices face severe pressure and, indeed, any Christians voicing opposition to the dictatorial regime are swiftly placed under arrest. The government also uses COVID-19 restrictions as a pretext for putting pressure on churchgoers. The country also faces organized corruption that hinders access to justice.

Persecution engines

Angola: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Not at all
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Weak
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Medium
Communist and post - Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Strong

Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Medium
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The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.

Dictatorial paranoia (Strong)

Angola is run by a government that is not democratic. Space for civic organizations and opposition is very limited. The August 2017 parliamentary election was won by the MPLA. (Several opposition groups accused the MPLA government of rigging the election and discredit the electoral process.) The MPLA has not shown any change in terms of democratization and protecting human rights since then. The government backs all institutions which support its policies and when it perceives that certain churches are not doing this sufficiently, it will close them down along with any church-related institutions. The government principally uses church registration laws to control church activities. The country has not officially recognized any church since 2004, which means that there are hundreds of churches operating without proper registration. They are thereby vulnerable as targets for government crackdowns.

Christian denominational protectionism (Medium)

There have been several reported cases where the government favors denominations which support its policies. According to the [US State Department's 2017 Religious Freedom Report](#): "Some leaders of legally recognized religious organizations continued to criticize publicly the proliferation of smaller, unrecognized religious groups. Newer and more established religious groups traded accusations of corruption and profiting from their members' personal assets. Governmental organizations, as well as some religious associations, called for all new religious groups to rejoin their 'mother churches' or cease operations."

Organized corruption and crime (Medium)

Angola is one of the most corrupt countries in Africa. According to Transparency International (CPI 2020), the country ranks 142nd out of 180 countries with a score of 27 points. The way this engine affects Christians is how it has influenced the application of the rule of law. In conjunction with *Dictatorial paranoia*, this engine has made it impossible for many Christian groups, for example, to get official permits for operating legally in the country.

Drivers of persecution

Angola: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	-	-	-	WEAK	MEDIUM	-	-	STRONG	MEDIUM
Government officials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Strong	Medium
Ethnic group leaders	Weak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Christian religious leaders	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Religious leaders of other churches	-	-	-		Medium				
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs			Very weak		Weak				
One's own (extended) family			Very weak		Weak				
Organized crime cartels or networks								Medium	Medium

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Strong):** The ruling party, MPLA, has been favoring church denominations that support its political policies. Government officials arrest Christians who voice opposition to the dictatorial regime.
- **Organized criminal networks (Medium):** Impunity in the country makes government accountability impossible. This is partly due to the existence of corruption and bribery and affects Christians in many ways.

Drivers of Christian denominational protectionism

- **Leaders of other churches (Medium):** The well-established Roman Catholic Church often sides with the government when it comes to restricting other churches. Church leaders, family, and extended family members also create a hostile environment for Christians 'converting' from one denomination to another.

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

- **Government officials (Medium):** The main drivers are government officials who have created an environment of impunity that undermines the rule of law. This means that Christians, whose churches face closure, for instance, cannot get a fair decision if they go to court.
- **Organized networks (Medium):** The country is known for organized and widespread corruption and the upholding of the rule of law is not common. Many Christians have been struggling to organize themselves freely, as a result.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The Province of Cabinda, in particular, is where many churches and church leaders have faced arrest and intimidation by government security agents.

Christian communities and how they are affected

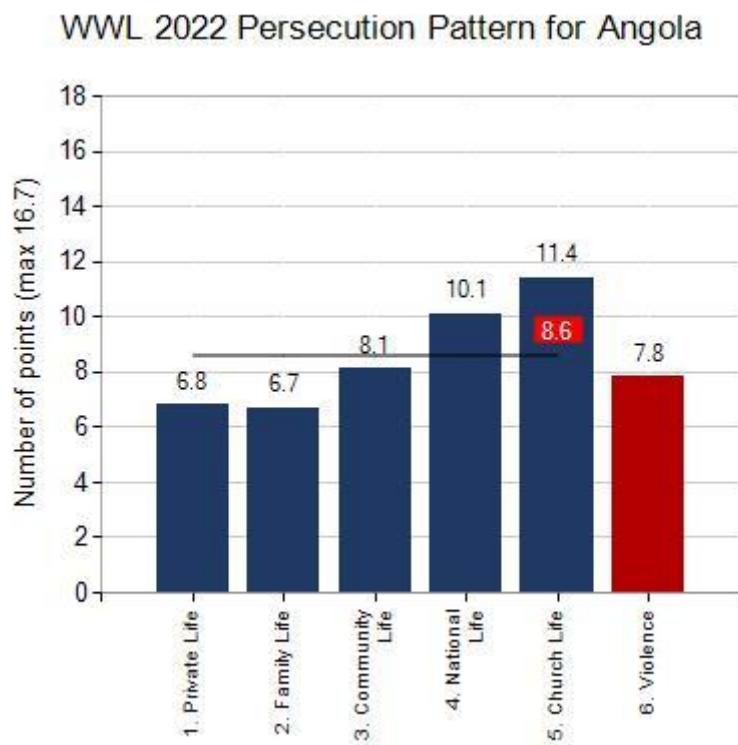
Communities of expatriate Christians: Although there are many expatriate Christians living in the country, they are not isolated and can worship freely with other Christians. For this reason they are not scored as a separate category in WWL analysis.

Historical Christian Communities: The largest denomination in this category is the Roman Catholic Church. These Christians often enjoy relative freedom but at times government officials also target them when church leaders have failed to endorse the government on certain issues.

Converts: In Angola, this category consists mainly of 'cross-denominational converts' who face persecution from the churches they left. There are also few converts from Islam and other non-Christian religions and these face discrimination and persecution from their families. Like other Christian groups, converts will also face persecution from the government if they publicly oppose the government's political policies.

Non-traditional Christian communities: Non-traditional church groups such as Pentecostals and Evangelicals face the toughest persecution of all. They are targeted by the government through its registration laws, and (as emphasized above) the government has not granted any new church registration since 2004. Christian groups from the historical church denominations also discriminate against these groups because they consider them a threat to their dominance.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2022 Persecution pattern for Angola shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Angola is 8.6 points, a rise from 7.7 points in WWL 2021.
- The *Church sphere* score is the highest (11.4 points), followed by the *National sphere* score with 10.1 points. This reflects the fact that the main challenges faced by Christians are the laws and policies set out by the government, indirectly also facilitated by drivers of *Organized corruption and crime* and *Christian denominational protectionism*.
- The score for violence remains 'very high' with 7.8 points.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2022 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (2.75 points)

Generally, Christians from non-traditional groups are spied on when they meet with other Christians. This is particularly true in Cabinda Province, where the authorities think Evangelical Christians and pastors could be supporting the political independence movement.

Block 1.8: It has been risky for Christians to speak about their faith with those other than immediate family (extended family, others). (1.75 points)

This is a Christian majority country and so in a general sense, it is not a problem. But, there is a caveat: This issue particularly concerns 'interdenominational converts'. If they mention their new church loyalty outside their family it could lead to ostracization. This is also the case for those leaving the traditional African belief system (ATR) or those who mix Christianity and traditional beliefs.

Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (1.25 points)

As stated in 1.8, Angola is a Christian majority country and so in a general sense, it should not be an issue. However, it is for converts from ATR or Islam and for 'interdenominational converts'. The challenge comes from families adhering to the traditional belief system, or major Christian denominations who see converts as a threat to their dominance.

Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (1.25 points)

Converts from the traditional belief system or other forms of Christianity will conceal their new faith due to the lack of tolerance in society. If the expression of faith is in the public domain and it involves criticizing government behavior, it can bring another dimension of persecution from the authorities.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (2.00 points)

In the general context of a country that has a majority Christian population, this should not be an issue. Yet, baptism cannot easily be carried out for some Christians in Angola. The new churches and converts face difficulties carrying out activities - including baptism - as most of them are denied the legal right to assembly. Thus, it is often the case they they are forced to carry out baptisms outside a church setting.

Block 2.12: Christian spouses of non-Christians have been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases. (1.75 points)

This happens in the context of converts. In some places those who left Catholicism or the traditional belief system lose any chance of claiming custody of children. This is often used as a punishment for those who dishonor their family members by converting to Christianity (or another form of Christianity).

Block 2.13: Christians have lost their inheritance rights because of their conversion to Christianity or (if a person already was a Christian) other types of Christianity. (1.75 points)

This is done in ultra-conservative Catholic households to scare others who might contemplate switching denominations. This is particularly true where most family-related matters are done by custom and not before the court of law.

Block 2.11: Spouses of converts have been put under pressure (successfully or unsuccessfully) by others to divorce. (1.50 points)

In general terms, Christians often marry Christians, thus there is no issue. However, there are exceptions where pressure is exerted by family or community members. Blaming and shaming is likely to force a convert's marriage partner to seek separation and divorce.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

Block 3.1: Christians have been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (e.g. for not meeting majority religion or traditional dress codes, beard codes etc.). (3.50 points)

Angola has seen major religious freedom issues in the past decade. The government set the tone for new denominations by denying them licenses to operate, build churches and so forth. This government stance has given added reason for the major denominations to make the unregistered Christian groups unwelcome.

Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.00 points)

In Angola, the government works with locals and sometimes with church officials belonging to the dominant denominations. The government is keen to know whether church leaders are criticizing its actions. The police collect reports from informers which can then lead to the closure of unregistered churches, some of which have been waiting since 2004 for their applications for registration to be processed.

Block 3.10: Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

There are two major sources of persecution in this context. Some Christians are critical of the government because their faith encourages them to speak out against injustice and corruption.

Those people face discrimination at the workplace. In addition, those belonging to the dominant churches do not often treat members of the new Christian groups with fairness and equality.

Block 3.11: Christians have been hindered in the operation of their businesses for faith-related reasons (e.g. access to loans, subsidies, government contracts, client boycotts). (2.75 points)

There are many factors in the country that affect Christians. First, Christians business-owners who refuse to pay bribes always face difficulties. Secondly, loyalty to the government is required for a business to receive benefits from the local authorities. But many Christians who speak out for justice refuse such loyalty on grounds of justice and conscience. Many Christian organizations or associations are unable to receive state benefits because their applications for legal recognition have not been processed.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

Block 4.1: The Constitution (or comparable national or state law) limits freedom of religion as formulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (4.00 points)

Angola has one of the most restrictive freedom of religion laws, particularly in terms of freedom of association/assembly. Registration in the country is very arduous. The decree 74/15 required NGOs to go through onerous registration processes, including registering with multiple authorities, such as the Foreign Ministry, and obtaining a “declaration of suitability”. It also allowed authorities to determine the nature of the programs and projects to be implemented by the organizations. Enforcement of the law in March 2015 led to several human rights groups facing difficulties accessing their bank accounts, as some banks demanded to see the required approval documents, even though the government was not issuing such certification. This issue is still prevalent even though the government tries to hide it. The requirement that a denomination should have 60,000 members (and churches in the majority of the provinces) has been impossible to fulfil for many Christian groups.

Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.75 points)

Christians from unregistered groups in particular are under serious pressure. The way the authorities refuse to deal with applications for registration is a form of discrimination. Also, there is constant pressure on church leaders (especially of registered churches) to show their support to the ruling party.

Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.50 points)

Angola is known for its restriction on freedom of expression. In this context, the ruling party has not allowed church life to flourish by putting restrictive registration laws in place. It has also created institutionalized discrimination that has been implemented through its cadres covertly. In this context, many Christians have been silenced and freedom of speech is very restricted. As a result, Christians are being forced to remain silent even when they see injustice happening.

Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)

Angola is one of the most corrupt nations in southern Africa. In Transparency International's CPI index 2021, it ranked 136/180. This has an impact on Christians when it comes to the issue of justice, rule of law and accountability. If Christians want to adhere to their Christian principles and share their concerns about justice in the country, the ruling party will not tolerate them taking up positions in public offices.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (4.00 points)

The government always monitors unregistered churches. Government security agents show up regularly and at times arrest the pastor/priest. Concerned by the ongoing monitoring and threat against civil society (including churches), in May 2020 the [International Federation For Human Rights](#) sent an open letter to the president of the republic listing the "continuing harassment, intimidations and arbitrary detention of human rights defenders" and of "members of civil society who act for the defense and promotion of the rights of ethnic minorities". This harassment and intimidation extends to churches and its leaders.

Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (4.00 points)

This is probably the most known restriction on freedom of religion. The law requires that denominations must have more than 60,000 members before they can be officially registered. This has made it impossible for the new non-traditional churches to register. Hence, since 2004 reports show that no new church has been legally recognized. This has led to many churches being built without official licenses. As a result, the government has closed down and demolished thousands of them.

Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (3.50 points)

The government sees any form of meeting and association as a threat to its power. As described in 5.2, the refusal by the authorities to process registration applications means that most non-traditional church groups are unable to legally meet or build places of worship.

Block 5.4: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities inside their place of worship. (3.50 points)

Most of the unregistered churches risk arrest and other penalties when they meet for worship. So many illegal churches have now been demolished that many non-traditional Christian groups meet in homes (house churches) which invites further legal risks to the families involved.

Violence

Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following 5 points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:

1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced. Possible reasons for this may be:

- Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.
- In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.
- If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.
- In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.

2. Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:

- Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).
- In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.
- Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately. Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other oppressive factors that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. These numbers could be immense.

3. For further discussion (with a focus on the complexity of assessing the numbers of Christians killed for their faith) please see World Watch Monitor's article dated 13 November 2013 available at:
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/number-of-christian-martyrs-continues-to-cause-debate/>.

4. The use of symbolic numbers: In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10*, 100* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000*, 100,000* and 1,000,000*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

5. The symbol "x" in the table: This denotes a known number which cannot be published due to security concerns.

Angola: Violence Block question		WWL 2022	WWL 2021
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	0	0
6.2	How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	100 *	100 *
6.3	How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.4	How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	0	0
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	0	10
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	0	0
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	100 *	100 *
6.9	How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.10	How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.11	How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.12	How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	100 *	0

5 Year trends

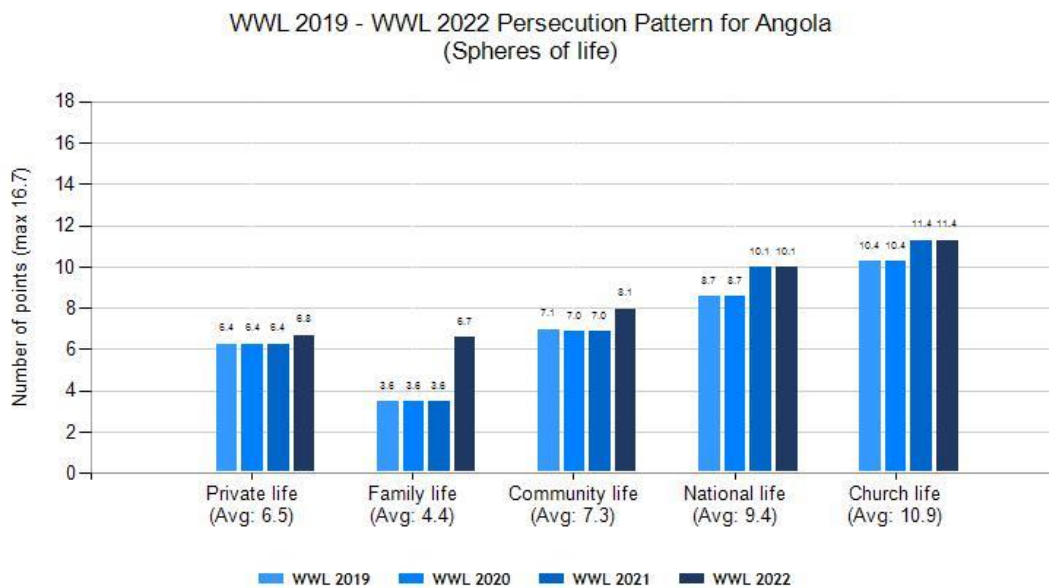
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

5 Year trends: Average pressure

Angola: WWL 2018 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2022	8.6
2021	7.7
2020	7.2
2019	7.2
2018	0.0

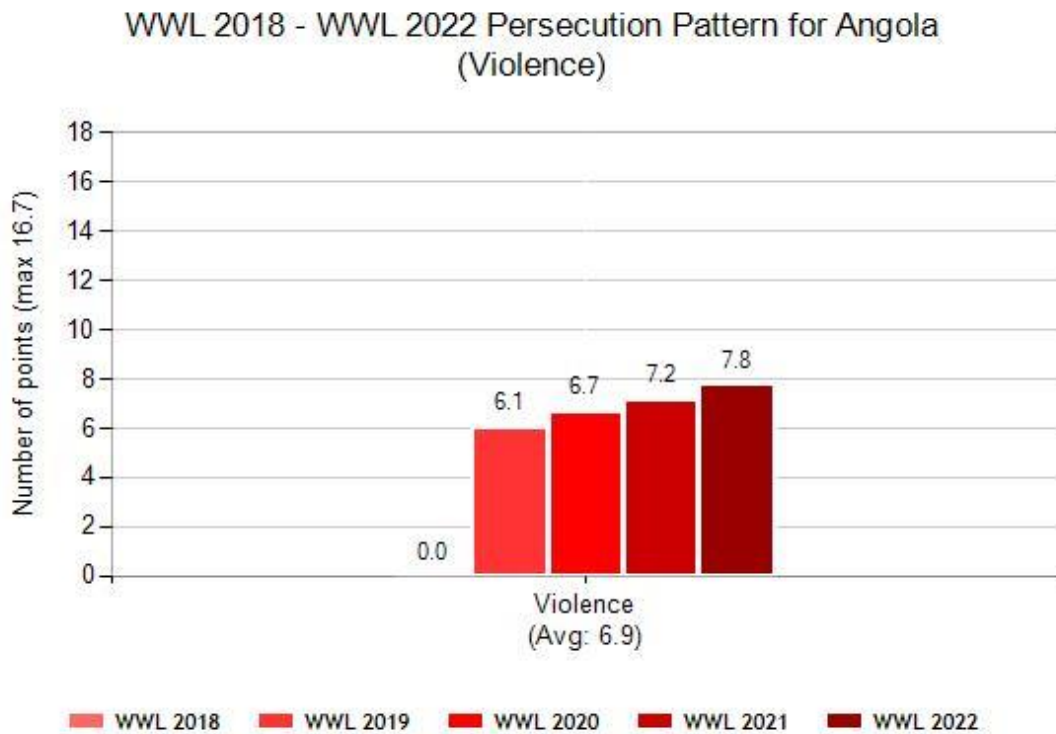
Since WWR started monitoring persecution in Angola in depth, the average pressure on Christians has consistently scored over 7.0 points. This reflects how a Christian majority country (of over 90%) suffers from a government that places significant restrictions on freedom of religion. The fact that the average pressure rose in WWL 2022 shows that the situation for Christians is not getting better despite the hopes that having a new president after 40 years of one man rule would bring positive change.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



The four years trend above shows that pressure in the *Church* and *National spheres of life* is the most severe and increasing. This is an indication that the pressure on Christians in Angola comes from the government at both national and local levels, and has resulted in making church activities extremely difficult.

5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



The graph above shows that the score for violence has been creeping up in each WWL reporting period. This has been due in part to the high number of church closures.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions
Political and Legal	Denied custody of children
Security	-
Social and Cultural	-
Technological	-

Although women are generally expected to be subservient to men in Angola, faith-specific gender-specific persecution is not widely reported. In some remote parts of the country, female Christian believers who have left Catholicism or African Traditional Religions (ATR) may be disinherited or lose custody of their children.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	-
Security	Forced to flee town/country
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological
Technological	-

Gender-specific religious persecution against Christian men and boys in Angola has not been widely reported. Church leaders are most vulnerable when such persecution does occur; they may be mentally abused for faith-related reasons and targeted by security forces. Some have reportedly had to go into hiding to escape arrest by the police.

Persecution of other religious minorities

All religious minorities face serious discrimination in the country. According to the US State Department (IRFR 2020), the Muslim community was particularly affected:

- The government continued not to recognize any Muslim groups or issue any licenses to Muslim groups to practice their religion legally. Requests for official recognition submitted in 2019 by two Muslim organizations, CISA (Islamic Community of Angola) and COIA (also translated as the Islamic Community of Angola), remained pending. In the past, government officials stated that some practices allowed by Islam, such as polygamy, contradicted the constitution. According to COIA, there were 69 unregistered mosques in the country.
- "While the 2014 census reported there were an estimated 103,000 Muslims in the country, one leader of a Muslim organization stated there could be as many as 800,000, including an unknown number of Muslim migrants mainly from North and West African countries. There are approximately 350 Jews, who primarily are resident foreign nationals."

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Dictatorial paranoia

The government has intensified its negative policies against church groups, particularly concerning registration, and this will probably lead to many more church closures. There was hope that the election of the new president would be followed by reforms, but, as far as democracy and freedom is concerned, a continuation of the former president's policies is taking place. This will likely continue and the church will continue to face high levels of pressure and violence. The next election is set for August 2022, and the expectation to see reform or visible change in terms of freedom of religion is very low.

Christian denominational protectionism

Established churches have been working with the government to put pressure on unregistered churches. This was made clear when they supported the idea of bringing different churches under one umbrella. This pressure is likely to continue in the country. The fact that the government has demolished over 2000 churches and the major denominations have kept quiet, shows that there is some measure of complicity in this process.

Organized corruption and crime

There was hope that the new administration would fight corruption. Although there have been some attempts, they have not succeeded in minimizing the impact of corruption in the country. This Persecution engine will hence continue to affect Christians in the country.

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines description: US State Department's 2017 Religious Freedom Report - <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268860.pdf>
- Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (4.00 points): International Federation For Human Rights - <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/angola-open-letter-of-concern-on-members-of-civil-society-and>

Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on World Watch Research's Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) and on the World Watch Monitor website:

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Angola>
- <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/Angola>