

World  
Watch  
Research

## Uganda: Full Country Dossier

February 2022



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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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 / Uganda

## Brief country details

Uganda: Population (UN estimate for 2021)	Christians	Chr%
48,698,000	41,352,000	84.9

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

Uganda: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	48	69
WWL 2021	47	65
WWL 2020	48	62
WWL 2019	47	62
WWL 2018	46	57

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

## Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Uganda: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Islamic oppression	Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, One's own (extended) family, Violent religious groups, Non-Christian religious leaders
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials

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

## Brief description of the persecution situation

Bullying and harassment of Christians has become very common in eastern parts of the country. Particularly for converts from Islam, owning Christian materials or discussing Christian faith with family or community members has often led to expulsion, serious physical attacks and even killings. In addition, there have been reports of mob attacks on churches and Christians, as well as converts.

## Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

**7 December 2020:** A 41-year-old former Imam of Macca Mosque in Dolwe Island, Mayuge District was killed just a week after he converted to Christianity. According to several witnesses, he was seriously beaten by the local Muslim community and died later in hospital. (Source: In-country research)

**30 June 2021:** Islamic extremists in eastern Uganda set a pastor's home on fire, burning him to death in Buseta village, Kibuku District. (Source: In-country research)

**July 2021:** A former Islamic teacher who became a Christian was buried alive in Kabula, near Iganga. The assailants informed his wife that he should have heeded family advice and returned to Islam. (Source: In-country research)

**August 2021:** A woman was severely assaulted by her Muslim father in eastern Uganda after he learned that she had left Islam and her Muslim husband and married a Christian. (Source: In-country research)

**November 2021 (outside the WWL 2022 reporting period):** The Islamist group, Allied For Democratic Forces (ADF), has committed [suicide bombings](#) in the country with the intent of hurting Christians (Reuters, 16 November 2021).

## External Links - Situation in brief

- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: suicide bombings - <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/explosion-uganda-capital-kills-least-two-local-tv-2021-11-16/>

# WWL 2022: Keys to understanding / Uganda

## Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International country report	AI 2021	<a href="https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/uganda/">https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/uganda/</a>	15 September 2021
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107906">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107906</a>	15 September 2021
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2020	BTI 2020	<a href="https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/UGA">https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/UGA</a>	15 September 2021
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	<a href="https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uganda/">https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uganda/</a>	15 September 2021
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2020	EIU 2020	<a href="https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf">https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf</a>	15 September 2021
FFP's Fragile States Index 2021	FSI 2021	<a href="https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/">https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/</a>	15 September 2021
Freedom House's 2021 Democracy index (Not included)	Freedom House/Democracy 2021	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores</a>	
Freedom House's 2021 Global Freedom index	Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/country/uganda/freedom-world/2021">https://freedomhouse.org/country/uganda/freedom-world/2021</a>	15 September 2021
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2020 report	Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/country/uganda/freedom-net/2020">https://freedomhouse.org/country/uganda/freedom-net/2020</a>	15 September 2021
Garda World country report	Garda World	<a href="https://www.garda.com/crisis24/country-reports/uganda">https://www.garda.com/crisis24/country-reports/uganda</a>	15 September 2021
Human Rights Watch World Report 2021	HRW 2021	<a href="https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/uganda">https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/uganda</a>	15 September 2021
Internet World Stats 2021	IWS 2021	<a href="https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#ug">https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#ug</a>	15 September 2021
RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index	World Press Freedom 2020	<a href="https://rsf.org/en/uganda">https://rsf.org/en/uganda</a>	15 September 2021
Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index	CPI 2020	<a href="https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/uga">https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/uga</a>	15 September 2021
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators	HDI 2020	<a href="http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UGA">http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UGA</a>	15 September 2021
US State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom country reports	IRFR 2020	<a href="https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/uganda/">https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/uganda/</a>	15 September 2021
USCIRF 2021 country reports (Not included)	USCIRF 2021	<a href="https://www.uscifr.gov/countries">https://www.uscifr.gov/countries</a>	
World Bank country report	World Bank	<a href="https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda">https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda</a>	15 September 2021

## Recent history

In 1962, Uganda gained [independence](#) from Britain, and the traditional kingdoms of Ankole, Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro were accorded federal status and a certain amount of autonomy (South African History online, accessed 25 September 2020). Fortunately, the struggle for independence did not take a bloody course like it did in Kenya or Algeria; however, it was not easy as Britain was unwilling to relinquish one of its most prosperous colonies. Dr. Milton Obote of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) became the first prime minister. In 1967, Obote abolished the kingdoms and assumed both the office of president and prime minister.

In 1971, while President Obote was attending a Commonwealth meeting in Singapore, General Idi Amin Dada conducted a coup that effectively overthrew Obote's regime. Idi Amin expelled Asians from the country and conducted massacres especially against the Acholi and Lango civilians and soldiers. Under the leadership of Amin, Uganda became very repressive, with extrajudicial killings and mass executions becoming commonplace. In 1978, the Ugandan army invaded the Kagera strip of Tanzania. This was seen as an act of aggression by Tanzania which invaded the country in 1979. Idi Amin was defeated and fled the country (to Saudi Arabia via Libya).

Milton Obote took this opportunity and went back to his country, won the next presidential election and re-assumed power. During this time, Obote tried to revive the economy with the help of international aid, but Obote was ousted by another coup in 1985. In 1986, a leader of the guerrilla National Resistance Army (NRA), Yoweri Museveni, took control of the country,



formed a government of national unity, and has [remained in power](#) as president ever since (History World, accessed 25 September 2020). The rule of Museveni has not gone unchallenged, especially in the north. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fought against the Ugandan army and displaced millions of civilians whilst aiming to remove Museveni's regime. However, he is [still president](#) after 35 years in power, defeating Dr Besigye again in 2016 and Bobi Wine in January 2021 (The Guardian, January 2021). He is in firm control of the country and has been using the COVID-19 restrictions in his favor to further restrict opposition forces.

## Political and legal landscape

Uganda (Jamhuri ya Uganda) is a multi-party republic (since 2005) with one legislative house that has 375 members. The Constitution has no presidential term limits. The president is both the head of the state and the government. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land, it also gives final decisions on constitutional matters. (Source: [The Commonwealth](#), accessed 3 February 2021)

In 2006, the first presidential and parliamentary elections were held after the introduction of a new multi-party system. Museveni won the presidency while his party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), won the majority of seats in parliament. Museveni and his party won the next three consecutive elections in 2011, 2016 and January 2021.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW 2021):

- "Authorities in Uganda stepped up restrictions on freedoms of expression and assembly ahead of general elections in February 2021. Authorities broke up opposition rallies, arrested government critics and opposition members, and placed restrictions on media. Security forces used COVID-19 restrictions as a pretext to beat, extort, and arbitrarily detain people."

As reported by International Crisis Group's (ICG) [March 2020 Global overview](#):

- Security forces arrested former intelligence chief and security minister Henry Tumukunde on 12 March 2020, who was planning to run for president in 2021. He was accused of allegedly seeking Rwanda's support to unseat Museveni and was charged with treason on 18 March 2020.
- On 4 March 2020, journalist and filmmaker Moses Bwayo was placed in custody after being arrested in February 2020 on charges of unlawful assembly while filming a documentary on opposition leader Bobi Wine, who was able to run for the presidential election in January 2021. (The police also detained a church leader on charges of unlawful assembly for hosting Wine at his home in March 2019).

As reported by The Guardian on 16 January 2021:

- "Museveni won a [sixth term in office](#) at the election on 14 January 2021. The electoral commission said Museveni had taken 59% of the vote and Wine 35%. His main rival, Bobi Wine, alleged widespread fraud and rejected the result. "The results followed one of the most violent election campaigns in Uganda, which included killings, the arrest of campaigners and civil society groups and intimidation by the security forces. Ugandan

authorities also shut down internet networks across most of the country. Turnout was 57%, the lowest since Museveni took office."

The US State Department qualified the electoral process as “[fundamentally flawed](#)” and The Africa Elections Watch coalition said they observed irregularities. The official voter turnout was 57% but is questioned since 409 polling stations were announced to have had 100% voter turnout (Reuters, 17 January 2021). On 13 January 2021, a day before the elections and a day after Facebook closed 'fake' accounts it said were linked to the government, the communications regulator in Uganda ordered all telecoms firms to block access to social media and messaging apps in retaliation. An [Amnesty International](#) press release (AI, 13 January 2021) also condemned this action, stating that it was “clearly intended to silence the few accredited election observers, opposition politicians, human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and bloggers who are monitoring the election”.

In a country where freedom and democracy are seen as luxury items, it is impossible to enjoy freedom of religion either individually or collectively. One moment, the president wants to gain support and embraces Christians, and the next moment he sees them as a threat and makes sure that their rights are severely restricted.

## Religious landscape

Uganda: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	41,352,000	84.9
Muslim	5,699,000	11.7
Hindu	375,000	0.8
Buddhist	2,800	0.0
Ethno-religionist	900,000	1.8
Jewish	2,000	0.0
Bahai	146,000	0.3
Atheist	17,300	0.0
Agnostic	192,000	0.4
Other	12,800	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)

Uganda is a Christian majority country. The reliability of religious statistics is disputed and Muslim leaders argue that their presence is much higher than the WCD 2021 estimate of less than 12%.

As per US State Department (IRFR 2020) which cites the 2014 Ugandan government census:

- "According to official government estimates, Muslims constitute 14 percent of the population. The UMSC estimates Muslims (primarily Sunni) are closer to 35 percent of the population. There is also a small number of Shia Muslims, mostly in Kampala and the eastern part of the country, particularly in the Mayuge and Bugiri Districts."

## Economic landscape

According to World Bank's [2021 Macro Poverty Outlook \(for Sub-Saharan Africa\)](#):

- **GDP growth:** With the full impact of the COVID-19 shock in FY21, real GDP growth is expected to decline to 1–2 percent compared to 2.9 percent in FY20. Growth contracted in the first quarter of FY21 (July–September 2020) by 2.2 percent (yoy)—the third consecutive quarter of negative growth—driven by a sharp decline in services, mostly tourism, and was offset in part by a mild recovery in industrial production.
- **Current account deficit:** Lower growth narrowed the current account deficit by 1 percentage point to 5.9 percent of GDP in FY20, as both exports and imports declined by US\$3.3 billion and outflows of investment income and employee compensation decelerated.
- **Poverty:** "COVID-19 may reverse the declining poverty trend from the past decade, with widespread closures of firms, permanent layoffs in industry and services, and a rapid slowdown of economic activity, especially in the urban informal sector. The economic scarring is likely to persist over the long run as real per capita income will struggle to catch up with levels expected before the crisis. The lack of social safety nets has resulted in the displacement of labor from urban employment back to low-productivity farming."
- **Inflation:** "Inflationary pressures have abated, despite expansionary monetary policy and financial policies aimed at easing liquidity for banks and businesses."
- **Economic outlook:** "The displacement of labor and an uncertain post-election period will slow the recovery from the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, with real GDP growth expected to pick up in FY22–23. This rebound, averaging 5.6 percent in FY22–23, is predicated on a pick-up in private consumption and investment, supported by higher growth in exports as the global economy recovers. The latter is assumed to benefit from the global rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021. A more prolonged downturn in tourism revenues, further subdued inflows of remittances, and delays in the final investment decision by companies in the oil sector could result in growth dropping to 4.5 percent over FY22–23. Despite an expected correction in the primary deficit to 2 percent of GDP by 2023, public debt is likely to exceed 51 percent of GDP by 2023."
- **Effect of Regional instability:** "Regional instability and a continued influx of refugees could undermine exports and disrupt growth in refugee-hosting parts of Uganda."

With a score of 60.0 points, Uganda ranked 116/190 in World Bank's [2020 Doing Business Index](#).

## Social and cultural landscape

According to UNDP's Human Development Report (HDI 2020) and the CIA Factbook:

- **Main ethnic groups:** Baganda 16.5%, Banyankole 9.6%, Basoga 8.8%, Bakiga 7.1%, Iteso 7%, Langi 6.3%, Bagisu 4.9%, Acholi 4.4%, Lugbara 3.3%, other 32.1% (2014 est.)
- **Main languages:** English (official), Ganda or Luganda, Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili (official), Arabic
- **Median age:** 16.7 years
- **Urban population:** 24.4%
- **Expected years of schooling:** 11.4 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (ages 15 and older):** 76.5%
- **Average employment to population ratio (ages 15 and older):** 69.0%
- **Unemployment, total:** 1.8% of the labor force
- **Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24):** 2.7%
- **HDI score and rank:** Uganda is ranked 159th out of 189 countries with a value of 0.544 points
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 63.4 years
- **Gender inequality index (GII):** 0.535

According to [the UNHCR's Country Refugee Response Plan](#) (accessed 29 June 2021):

- **Refugees:** Uganda hosted about 905,000 refugees from South Sudan in 2020 and 938,000 in 2021, with 19,210 new refugee arrivals in 2020 and 30,000 in 2021.
- **IDPs:** 32,000 (displaced in northern Uganda because of fighting between government forces and the Lord's Resistance Army; as of 2011, most of the 1.8 million people displaced to IDP camps at the height of the conflict had returned home or resettled, but in 2018 many had not found durable solutions due to inter-communal violence, land disputes and cattle raids).

Even though Uganda was popularized in the past as 'A Pearl of Africa' by the British, especially by Winston Churchill's book "My African Journey" (1908), the population remains poor, having suffered civil war, mismanagement and human rights abuses.

## Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2021):

- **Internet usage:** 39.3% of the population – survey date 31 December 2020
- **Facebook usage:** 7.1% of the population – survey date 31 December 2020

According to the World Bank (country profile):

- **Mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people:** 57.3

Uganda has been trying to build up its technological infrastructure. According to the [government website MOSTI](#): "The Government of Uganda established a Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) on recognizing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) are the drivers of

socio-economic growth and transformation the world over. Technology and Innovation development is an important determinant of progress and transition."

However, access to and the use of modern technology has been very much restricted by the government. According to Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020:

- "The government has a history of blocking access to social media and communications platforms altogether during politically sensitive moments. During the last general elections, in 2016, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and mobile money services were blocked for four days. President Museveni declared the blocks a necessary measure to prevent people from using the platforms to 'tell lies'. Access to the platforms was restored three days after the elections, but was obstructed again for 'security reasons' the day before Museveni's inauguration to another contested five-year term in office."
- "Online users have been forced to remove content from their social media pages, and the practice is likely underreported. In an anonymous interview in May 2018, a blogger claimed that he had been approached by security operatives and offered a bribe to remove content from his blog that was deemed 'defamatory' toward the government. Although the blogger did not take the bribe or remove the content, he expressed fear for his life, which compelled him to cease writing about certain sensitive topics."

As reported by Deutsche Welle on 12 September 2019, the government has been in [close collaboration](#) with the Chinese technology firm Huawei for surveillance purposes. As reported by The Times on 16 August 2019, Huawei allegedly helped the government [monitor](#) the online activity of Museveni's political rival, Bobi Wine. What this shows is that the government is investing in technology to suppress freedom.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW 2021):

- In 2020: "The government introduced new requirements that restrict freedom of expression online. On September 7, the Uganda Communications Commission issued a public notice requiring 'providers of online data and communication', including bloggers and online TV providers, to seek authorization from the body by October 5, 2020, and pay a fee of 100,000 Uganda shillings (US\$26.82). On July 27, plainclothes police arrested television host Bassajja Mivule. Police said videos of him circulating on social media 'promote hatred'. Mivule told media that when he was questioned, the police played video clips of him speaking about Minister of Information and Communications Technology Judith Nabakooba, which they said was offensive toward her, and another in which Mivule rallied Baganda people 'to rise up', for which police accused him of promoting sectarianism."

## Security situation

The two main violent militant groups in Uganda's recent history are:

### 1. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA):

The influence of this group in northern Uganda is diminishing and it is believed that only a few remnants are now in existence in the forests of the Central African Republic. In 2017, the

Ugandan Army that had been conducting an operation in the Central African Republic, [ended](#) its operation stating that LAR is no longer a threat to Uganda (BBC News, 19 April 2017).

The LRA was originally set up by former members of the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF), which was founded by the self-proclaimed priestess Alice Auma Lakwena, who fought against the Ugandan army in 1986-1987. The group first formed the United Holy Salvation Army and then changed its name to the Uganda Christian Army/Movement. In 1992, it became the [Lord's Resistance Army](#) (Al-Jazeera, 6 May 2014). Ever since it was created, the LRA waged a brutal war in an attempt to remove the government of Museveni. Even though the LRA claimed to be establishing a country ruled by the Bible's Ten Commandments, the acts they committed were clearly evil and by no means Christian. The LRA has committed atrocities in northern Uganda and South Sudan: Forced marriages, child soldiering, sexual and other forms of enslavement are just some examples. In December 2003, the government of Uganda referred the matter to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Five LRA leaders, namely Kony, Lukwiya, Odhiambo, Ongwen, and Otti were charged under different counts. Except for [Dominic Ongwen](#), who was arrested in 2015, the rest are still at large (BBC News, 6 December 2016).

According to HRW 2021:

- "In 2020, the case of Dominic Ongwen, alleged former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commander charged with 70 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, concluded at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Closing statements took place from March 10 to 12. A verdict was pending at time of writing. Two ICC warrants remain outstanding for the arrest of LRA leaders Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti, who is presumed dead."
- "The International Crimes Division (ICD) of Uganda's High Court continued the trial of alleged former LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo—in custody since his capture in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2009—on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The trial has had numerous delays, and proceedings also were suspended due to COVID-19."

## **2. The Allied Democratic Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU):**

This Islamist group was formed in 1995 to violently oppose President Museveni and to establish an Islamic state in Uganda. ADF-NALU is also sometimes referred to as 'Muslim Defense International' (MDI). The founder of the group, Jamil Mukulu was sanctioned by the United Nations. According to official [UN records](#), Mukulu was arrested in April 2015 in Tanzania and extradited to Uganda in July 2015 (UN Security Council, accessed 28 September 2020).

According to the [Human Rights Watch's World Report 2020](#):

- "In September [2019], the International Crimes Division (ICD) of Uganda's High Court confirmed charges of terrorism, murder, attempted murder, aggravated robbery against Jamil Mukulu, the alleged leader of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and 37 others."

ADF has also targeted Uganda in August and September 2021. The country's security apparatus is on high alert after jihadists who were trained in North Kivu infiltrated the country operations.

### **In general:**

The US State Department's Travel Advisory (accessed 28 September 2020) [states](#): "Violent crime, such as armed robbery, home invasion, kidnapping, and sexual assault, is common, especially in larger cities including Kampala and Entebbe. Local police lack the resources to respond effectively to serious crime."

In the eastern part of the country, Christians are heavily affected by radicalized Islamic youth who commit mob attacks on Christians on a regular basis.

## **Trends analysis**

The future for the Christian community in Uganda would seem to depend on two major factors: 1. How the government addresses the rise of Islamic militancy and the growing pressure on Christians in eastern Uganda; 2. How the government itself respects freedom of religion and its components.

### **1) Uganda has been ruled by one man for over 35 years**

The president is still in a strong position to continue in office since the Constitution has been amended to allow him to do so. It is likely that he will continue ruling the country through the means he has employed in the past (arresting his opponents, harassing them, restricting freedom of expression and assembly). In this context, it is inevitable that Christians also face serious challenges.

### **2) There is little or no protection for Christians in eastern Uganda**

Considering the fact that the region is far from stable, the international community seems unwilling at present to push Uganda into making reforms aiming to respect human rights in general and freedom of Christians in particular. There is no indication that the government is likely to intervene with any serious intention of protecting Christians facing Islamic violence - particularly in eastern Uganda.

### **3) ADF is becoming increasingly visible**

ADF has become very visible in Uganda after sending its trained fighters to the country to terrorize the population. This issue will become even more troubling as ADF is getting stronger in the DRC forest regions.

## **External Links - Keys to understanding**

- Recent history: independence - <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/uganda-gains-independence>
- Recent history: remained in power - <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad22>
- Recent history: still president - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/16/uganda-president-wins-decisive-election-as-bobi-wine-alleges>
- Political and legal landscape: The Commonwealth - <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/uganda/constitution-politics>
- Political and legal landscape: March 2020 Global overview - <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/april-alerts-and-march-trends-2020#uganda>

- Political and legal landscape: sixth term in office - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/16/uganda-president-wins-decisive-election-as-bobi-wine-alleges>
- Political and legal landscape: fundamentally flawed - <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-uganda-election-idUSKBN29M04E>
- Political and legal landscape: Amnesty International - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/01/uganda-authorities-must-lift-social-media-block-amid-crackdown-ahead-of-election/>
- Economic landscape: 2021 Macro Poverty Outlook (for Sub-Saharan Africa) - <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/720441492455091991/mpo-ssa.pdf>
- Economic landscape: 2020 Doing Business Index - <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/data/exploreconomies/uganda>
- Social and cultural landscape: the UNHCR's Country Refugee Response Plan - <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Uganda%20Country%20RRP%202019-20%20%28January%202019%29.pdf>
- Technological landscape: government website MOSTI - <https://mosti.go.ug/>
- Technological landscape: close collaboration - <https://www.dw.com/en/huawei-africa-and-the-global-reach-of-surveillance-technology/a-50398869>
- Technological landscape: monitor - <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/huawei-helped-african-regimes-to-monitor-rivals-2bfmxm9v9>
- Security situation: ended - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39643914>
- Security situation: Lord's Resistance Army - <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/10/2011101418364196576.html>
- Security situation: Dominic Ongwen - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-38219007>
- Security situation: UN records - <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1533/materials/summaries/individual/jamil-mukulu>
- Security situation: Human Rights Watch's World Report 2020: - <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/uganda>
- Security situation: states - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/uganda-travel-advisory.html>

## WWL 2022: Church information / Uganda

### Christian origins

Since Uganda is a landlocked country deep inside the African continent, Christianity entered the region relatively late compared to other parts of Africa (especially the coastal regions). Protestant missionaries first arrived at the court of Kabaka Muteesa (who reigned 1856-1884) in 1877. The Roman Catholic Church became established in the country in 1879. Other Christian denominations arrived in the 1930s (and following decades), including the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, an Orthodox community under the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, the All Africa Church, the New Apostolic Church, the Seventh-day Adventists and the Church of God. (Source: [Dictionary of African Christian Biography](#), accessed 28 September 2020).

There was a wave of persecution of Christians in 1885-86 (including brutal murders) and later in the 1970s under Idi Amin.



## Church spectrum today

Uganda: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	33,400	0.1
Catholic	20,008,000	48.4
Protestant	19,889,000	48.1
Independent	1,153,000	2.8
Unaffiliated	624,000	1.5
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-357,000	-0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,350,400</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	8,984,000	21.7
Renewalist movement	10,322,000	25.0

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.

Uganda is a majority Christian nation, the largest Christian group being the Roman Catholic church.

## External Links - Church information

Christian origins: Dictionary of African Christian Biography - <https://dacb.org/sort/stories/uganda/>

## WWL 2022: Persecution Dynamics / Uganda

### Reporting period

1 October 2020 - 30 September 2021

### Position on the World Watch List

Uganda: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	48	69
WWL 2021	47	65

WWL 2020	48	62
WWL 2019	47	62
WWL 2018	46	57

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

Uganda's score increased by one point compared to WWL 2021, due to a rise in pressure in the *Community sphere of life*. Although the violence score fell, it remains at an extreme level. The situation for Christians in the country is becoming complicated; the influence of the radical Islamic group, ADF, is affecting the attitude of the Muslim minority of 11.7%, especially Muslim religious leaders. Christians particularly face difficulties in the eastern part of the country where radical Muslims are known to attack churches and Christians. Most converts have to endure many forms of persecution orchestrated by family members and community elders/leaders. *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Organized corruption and crime* also play a role in making persecution a reality in the country.

## Persecution engines

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

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.

### Islamic oppression (Very strong)

Radical Islam is the primary source of persecution in Uganda as Muslims strive to increase in number, influence and visibility. Although Uganda is a secular country, it joined the OIC in the 1970's when Idi Amin was president. The Muslim population is found predominantly in eastern Uganda, with Iganga District/Busoga having the highest concentration. Towns with large Muslim communities are Mbale town and surroundings; Kasese/Bwera in western Uganda; Arua/Yumbe in northern Uganda; and Kampala/Jinja in central Uganda.

This Persecution engine is apparent in two forms:

(i) in the rise of radical Islamic influence in the eastern part of the country, where the Tabliqs (a sect of puritanical Muslims whose members portray themselves as Muslim evangelists) have continued to advance their version of Islam in areas like Mbale, Kasese, Arua/Yumbe. A country expert reports that there are "tangible efforts by Islamic groups to convert groups of the population in the eastern region where Islam is championed the most".

(ii) in the morale boost to radical Muslims in the country generated by the activities of ADF-NALU - now commonly referred to as Muslim Defense International (MDI).

### Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

President Yoweri Museveni has been in power since 1986. In 2005, he forced Parliament to remove the term limits in the 1995 Constitution allowing him to run for further terms in office. In 2018 he manipulated parliament to [remove the presidential age limit](#) (set at 75), thus clearing him to run for a sixth term in the January 2021 presidential election (Library of Congress, 27 December 2017), which he then won. Throughout these years, President Museveni has often silenced Christians and Christian leaders who have dared to oppose him.

## Drivers of persecution

Uganda: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	STRONG			WEAK	WEAK			MEDIUM	WEAK
Government officials								Medium	
Ethnic group leaders				Weak					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Medium								
Religious leaders of other churches				-	Weak				
Violent religious groups	Medium								
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Strong								
One's own (extended) family	Strong								
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.) and embassies									Weak

*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 Islamic oppression

- **Family (Strong):** Family and the local community, especially in Muslim-dominated areas, are the main drivers in this context. Converts from Islam have found it particularly difficult and sometimes heinous attacks have been carried out by a convert's family.

- **Citizens (Strong):** Citizens in the eastern part of the country target Christians, especially converts. For example, owning Christian materials or discussing their faith with family members or community members was often matched by expulsion, serious physical attacks (sometimes by mobs) and even death. Harassment - targeting Christians with a Muslim background in particular - is very common in eastern parts of the country.
- **Non-Christians religious leaders (Medium):** Imams and sheiks, especially in the eastern part of the country, are either encouraging attacks against Christians, especially converts, or preaching hateful messages during Friday sermons.
- **Violent religious groups (Medium):** Even though there are jihadists in DRC planning to establish a caliphate in Uganda, the impact it has created so far is not immense. Nevertheless, their influence causes fear and radical clerics are rumored to be helping recruit young members.

#### **Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia:**

- **Government officials (Medium):** The drivers of this engine are mainly government officials who are either complicit in acts of persecution or are the main perpetrators. Sometimes, they do not investigate and bring perpetrators to justice. Christians who speak out against injustice are often targeted by government officials.

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

Persecution is strongest in eastern Uganda, especially for converts with a Muslim background.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** This category does not exist as a separate WWL category in the country as expatriate Christians are not involuntarily isolated.

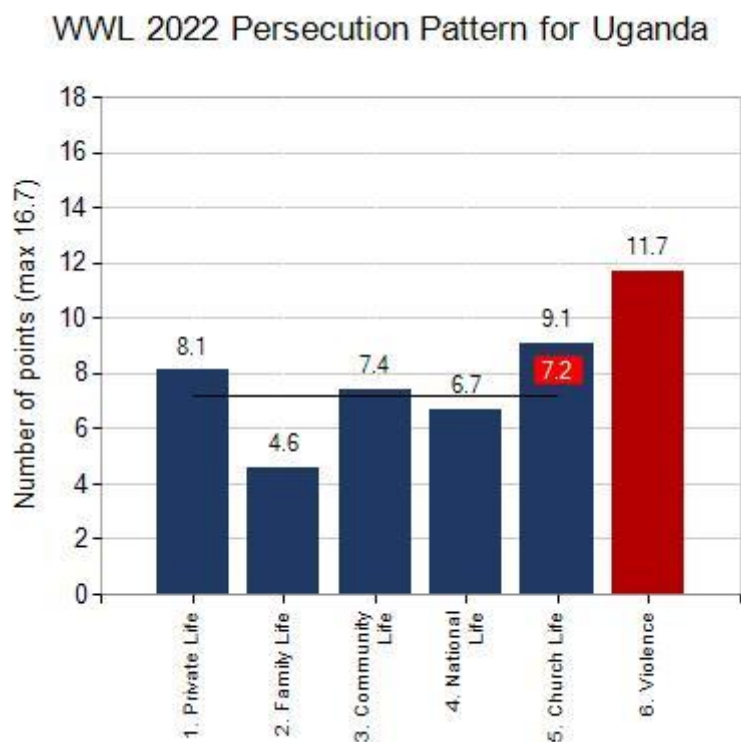
**Historical Christian communities:** This category has a strong presence in the country and includes the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church (Church of Uganda), Orthodox Church and Seventh Day Adventists, among others. According to country researchers, those that are based in Muslim-dominated areas are the ones that report persecution while those in predominantly Christian regions are free to conduct their church activities undisturbed.

**Converts:** This category includes converts from Islam but also “cross-denominational” converts. A country researcher writes: “Some converts are open about their new faith and face much persecution and pressure to revert to Islam or their former 'traditional' Christianity, while others, especially from Islam, remain underground and only meet with brethren and pastors in secret. Overall, this category of Christians reports the highest number of persecution cases, as well as the most intense.”

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** This category is becoming increasingly visible in the country. A country researcher states: “The growth of this category of Christians, particularly the evangelicals/Pentecostals/charismatics, has been rapid and their numbers continue to increase.

There are thousands of churches that adhere to the various Pentecostal faith systems. The churches are also widespread as they plant churches in all areas of the country. Those in predominantly Christian regions enjoy relative peace and acceptance while those in Muslim dominated areas such as Jinja District, Arua, Yumbe, Mbale etc. report high numbers of persecution cases as they are aggressive in evangelism.”

## The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2022 Persecution pattern for Uganda shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Uganda is at a level of 7.2 points.
- The *Church sphere scored highest (9.1 points) followed by the Private sphere* scoring 8.1 points. Converts in the eastern part of the country have been struggling to live their lives according to their Christian faith due to family and community harassment and shunning.
- The score for violence is 11.7 points, which is extremely high especially considering the fact that Uganda is a Christian majority country.

## 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 1.1: Conversion has been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another. (2.50 points)**

Religious intolerance is becoming an increasing problem. This is particularly the case in eastern Uganda and in some areas where Muslims are the majority. Conversion has become a cause for many deaths and physical attacks in the eastern part of the country. Losing jobs, harassment by relatives and community, as well as being disowned by one's family, are some of the challenges that converts face in Uganda.

### **Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.25 points)**

In the eastern part of the country where there has been less or no protection for Christians with a Muslim background, it is very dangerous to conduct acts of worship. This is particularly true for young converts or if a spouse has become a convert. There were reports of some being expelled from their homes and denied access to property or their children. Women who have been discovered worshipping have been dragged out of their houses, forced to divorce and expelled from the community.

### **Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (2.25 points)**

Generally, Christians are free to own Christian materials and freely move around with a Bible etc.. Even some non-Christian businessmen deal in distributing Christian materials. Most Christians can reveal their faith without fear by giving testimonies in fellowships, church services, burial places, community meetings and even on social media. However, some converts from Islam are forced to remain silent because open revelation of their conversion can easily provoke an attack, threats and other forms of persecution from their immediate and extended families. Those who were discovered with Christian materials in their houses were beaten and expelled from their homes and community.

### **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.). (2.25 points)**

Convert Christians do not use their Christian names where they fear being mocked, rejected and even denied job opportunities. In some circumstances after mentioning their new faith, they may be beaten, have property confiscated, and be divorced by their spouse. Children of parents who have written about their conversion get bullied and attacked at school.

## Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

### **Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (2.50 points)**

In Muslim dominated institutions such as the Islamic University in Uganda, it is compulsory for students to take 'Introduction to Islam' classes as well Arabic. Female students are forced to adhere to the Islamic dress code and have their names changed. In Kyarumba, Muhokya, Kisinga and Rukoki, Christian children can expect to receive a scholarship on condition that they give up following the Christian faith.

### **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. (2.25 points)**

If a new convert has children, the wider family is likely to deny him/her access to them. In the WWL 2022 reporting period, there were several reports where converts lost their share of inheriting property from deceased relatives due to their leaving Islam.

### **Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (1.50 points)**

This issue is also related to conversion. In the Muslim majority eastern part of the country (and even in pockets of Kampala itself), converts from Islam are scared to celebrate Christian weddings, out of fear of being attacked by mobs. Such attacks have happened on numerous occasions, causing levels of fear to rise in many Christian families.

### **Block 2.10: Christian spouses and/or children of Christians have been subject to separation for prolonged periods of time by circumstances relating to persecution. (1.50 points)**

In the context of conversion from Islam to Christianity, this has been the case especially in eastern Uganda. Christians who convert have been denied access to their children for months or even years. This is used as a tactic to force converts to return to Islamic faith, and has been successful in some cases.

## 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.). (2.75 points)**

In Muslim institutions a strict Islamic dress code has been introduced which both Muslims and Christians have to adhere to. In Muslim dominated areas, Christian business owners are often harassed and put under pressure to close their shops during Friday prayers and to stop selling items considered 'haram' by the Muslim community.

**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.). (2.75 points)**

Monitoring occurs in particular in eastern Uganda. In general:

- Local communities monitor Christian activities and are known to report them to the police claiming noise pollution.
- The Ugandan government monitors Internet services closely.
- It is common for Christians married to Muslims or ex-Muslims to be watched closely.
- In Yumbe (Kuru town center) a Christian known to actively care for converts has been watched on a daily basis.
- In Kasese and Bwera, Muslims from the local community actively monitor Christian activities within community charity projects, church programs and open-air evangelism.

**Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (2.50 points)**

This is not uncommon, in places where there is scarcity of water and Muslims dominate local community affairs, Christians are only allowed to fetch water after the Muslims have fetched their supplies. It has to be understood that communal resources play a very critical role in Uganda. Thus, denying someone because of his/her faith will have a huge impact on the family.

**Block 3.5: Christians have been put under pressure to take part in non-Christian religious ceremonies or community events. (2.50 points)**

In Kasese, Christians have been forced to participate in cultural festivals such as the "cleansing of the mountains". In Karamoja the Christian young men are forced to participate in "asapan", traditional rites initiating them into manhood. Refusal will lead to ostracization, bullying and harassment. They will be shamed in the public and denied access to some community resources and services.

## Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

**Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.25 points)**

Any Christian view that is not in line with that of the government is banished. This has been happening in many forms. For example, if Christians speak out about injustice in the country, they will be spied on and may even be killed. Especially during the last election, church leaders were receiving phone calls from anonymous people threatening to harm them if they openly criticized the government.

**Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

Christians in Uganda face discrimination in areas where the Muslim population is dominant. For example, in Yumbe, the Christian minority is frequently marginalized, intimidated and threaten-



ed, especially when government programs are carried out in the district. This is because most of the government officials and local leaders are Muslim. In general, the authorities treat those who speak out against corruption and lack of rule of law less favorably than government supporters.

**Block 4.9: Christian civil society organizations or political parties have been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions. (3.00 points)**

The government tends to monitor Christian NGOs which receive funding from abroad, suspecting them of financing the opposition to take over the government. In other incidences, Muslims have deliberately criticized Christian organizations in attempts to discredit them. Any group operating in the country cannot risk speaking out against the human rights violations occurring or corruption. As reported by Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021: NGO "operations are vulnerable to various legal restrictions, burdensome registration requirements, and occasional threats. NGOs that work on human rights issues have reported break-ins at their offices and burglaries in recent years, and the police have failed to adequately investigate the incidents." This is applicable to Christian NGOs as well.

**Block 4.15: Christians accused in court have been deprived of equal treatment. (3.00 points)**

There a number of reported land disputes in which churches have lost cases unfairly to members of the Muslim community. In general, there has been considerable interference in the operation of Ugandan courts by the government. Thus, for Christians who are arrested for speaking publicly against injustice etc., equal treatment is not expected.

## Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

**Block 5.20: It has been risky for churches or Christian organizations to speak out against instigators of persecution. (3.50 points)**

This is the case in Muslim-dominated areas and has affected all Christians, not only converts. This is also the case elsewhere, since the government will not allow any criticism against it. Those Christian NGOs or churches who speak against the actions of the government will constantly be harassed and their offices burgled with the police refusing to investigate. It is therefore not uncommon to see Christians leaders not speaking out against apparent injustices in the country due to the repercussions that might follow.

**Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.00 points)**

This has been the case on many occasions. There are two ways in which this happens: First, those churches that are seen as anti-government are often targeted by government security forces and spies. Their programs are often monitored and their church leaders are often targeted. Secondly, in the eastern region, Islamic groups monitor churches that are suspected of causing Muslims to convert to Christianity.

### **Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.00 points)**

Uganda is known for restricting freedom of assembly. Churches that want to have activities outside their compounds often fail to get permission from the government. In addition, in Muslim dominated areas, open air evangelism has been blocked in areas where the community leader is a Muslim and the majority are Muslims. This has happened, for instance, in Yumbe.

### **Block 5.9: Christians have experienced interference when choosing their own religious leaders. (3.00 points)**

The government of Uganda seeks to influence each and every organization (both big and small) by controlling their leaderships. The choosing of bishops has always involved a lot of state interference based around the political leanings of the candidates. The government will prefer candidates who are not vocal about political and social problems in the country. There are also reports emerging that the government is proposing to implement [extensive criteria](#) regarding who can lead a church (Religion Unplugged, 5 November 2019).

## **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.

Uganda: Violence Block question	WWL 2022	WWL 2021
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	4	5
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?	10 *	24
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	6	0
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	5
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	10 *	10 *
6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	194	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?	7	54
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?	10 *	10
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	30	10
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	9	0

## 5 Year trends

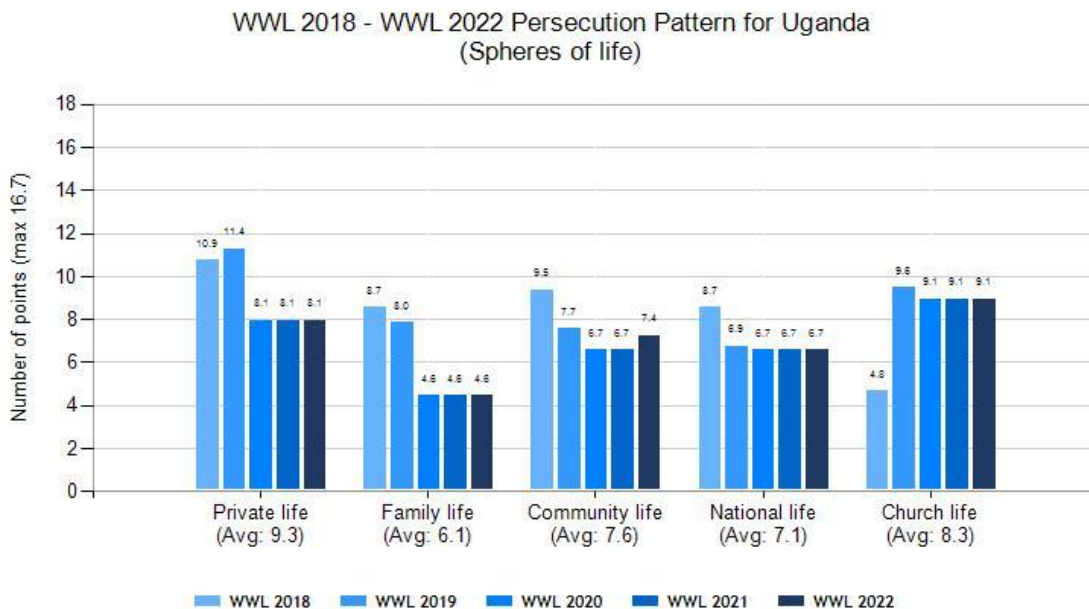
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

### 5 Year trends: Average pressure

Uganda: WWL 2018 - WWL 2022 Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2022	7.2
2021	7.0
2020	7.0
2019	8.7
2018	8.5

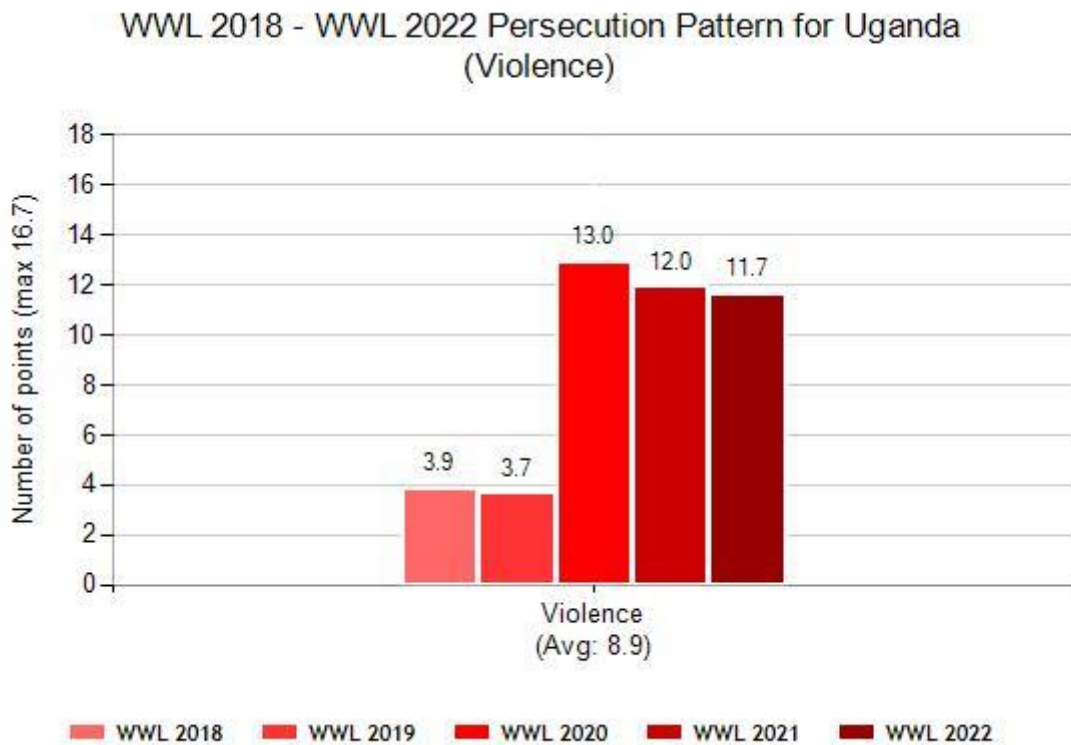
The table above shows that the average pressure on Christians has been between the range of 7.0 - 8.7 points over the last 5 WWL reporting periods. Even though the current level is not so high as in WWL 2018 - WWL 2019, Christians are still facing high levels of pressure.

### 5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



The chart above shows that the average pressure per sphere of life has been most pronounced in *Private* (9.3), *Church* (8.3) and *Community life* (7.6).

## 5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



Since WWL 2020, violence against Christians has been in the category 'extremely high'. Despite this, there are generally few reports about violence in the country in the news.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	Denied custody of children; Forced divorce; Forced marriage
Security	Forced out of home – expulsion; Incarceration by family (house arrest); Targeted Seduction; Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Denied food or water; Enforced religious dress code; Violence – psychological
Technological	-

According to local sources, women in Uganda are generally viewed as being inferior to men. In some tribes, women are not allowed to eat certain foods, such as chicken or eggs, which can lead to disproportionate malnutrition among women and girls. According to UN [statistics](#), 30% of 15- to 49-year-old girls had experienced physical or sexual violence in a 12 month period (UN Women, accessed 18 February 2022). [Very few rape cases](#) result in conviction, fostering a culture of impunity (Save the Children, 1 March 2019). Within this context, Ugandan Christian

women face pressure both on account of their gender, as well as due to their faith.

Christian women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, including rape. There were several reports of sexual violence over the past few years. In the WWL 2022 reporting period, one example was given of four women being raped on their way home from evening prayers. In secondary schools, a number of [gangs](#) are operating. Notable groups include the "Virgin Hunters", who particularly target girls thought to be virgins or innocent Christian girls (URNM, 23 October 2019). Sexual attacks leave victims feeling ashamed, embarrassed and unwilling to re-tell their ordeals.

Convert women face intense familial and societal hardships, at risk of being subjected to forced marriage, forced divorce, house arrest, imprisonment, domestic violence and abandonment by their families. Forced marriages to Muslims often occur as an attempt to return a convert to Islam. Others are enticed more subtly into marriage by financial incentives or the promise of scholarships. In Bufumbo, Mbale, a Muslim dominated area, boys reportedly elope with Christian girls, impregnate them and eventually force them into marriage. Once in these marriages, women have little power to access fellowship as a Christian.

The trauma of persecution on women has a long term impact on them, their family and their community. A country expert summarized as follows: "Women and girls normally suffer emotional trauma. This may cause them to be maladjusted for their entire life time and that becomes a cycle that affects the next generation and community at large."

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions; Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Political and Legal	Denied legal ability to marry Christian spouse; False charges; Imprisonment by government
Security	Abduction; Forced to flee town/country; Violence – death; Violence – physical
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

Ugandan Christian men face both violent and non-violent challenges to their faith. This has included travel restrictions, verbal abuse, threats from family members and discrimination in the work place (with employees being marginalized and denied promotion unless they convert to Islam). More overtly violent challenges include physical assault, abduction, imprisonment, domestic violence, and the confiscation of property. Pressures are particularly high in the east of the country.

Church leaders are especially targeted. They have been falsely accused of crimes, physically beaten and threatened. One pastor was abducted by officials and interrogated about his supposed involvement in terrorism. Converts to Christianity, too, face considerable pressure from their families and surrounding communities. They may be forced out of their family home and be completely rejected by their parents.

Whilst women are usually the victims of targeted seduction, men and boys also face lower levels of this, being seduced into marriage and then forced to convert. Finally, Christian men are commonly affected by enforced participation in traditional ceremonies. Among the Gishu, for example, Christian boys are forced to perform certain rituals during the circumcision rites even when it is against their Christian faith.

## Persecution of other religious minorities

Any religious group seeking to act according to their conscience is likely to be on a collision course with the government of Museveni. There have also been reports that the government unjustifiably targets Muslims. As reported by the US State Department (IRFR 2020):

- "Between May 18 and May 29, Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) officers arrested six Muslim clerics in Masaka District and accused them of running a cell operated by the ISIS-linked armed group Allied Democratic Front. The security forces continued to hold the clerics without trial at year's end. On July 5, the Uganda Police Force (UPF) evicted leaders of the Salafi-associated Tabliq Muslim group from a mosque in Kampala and arrested seven of its clerics before restoring management of the mosque to the largest Sunni umbrella organization, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC)."
- "In October, UMSC representatives stated the government continued to use the census figures as justification for discrimination against Muslims in appointments to public positions and in the deployment of social programs. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) continued to report sections of the Muslim population believed the government singled out Muslims as potential perpetrators of high-profile crimes and often arrested them without evidence. The NGOs reported that prolonged detention without trial, torture, and inhuman treatment of Muslim suspects by government security agencies continued."

## Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

### Islamic oppression

Islamic militants based in DRC and aiming to establish an Islamic State in Uganda might seem unrealistic; however, the impression it makes among Islamic Tabliqs is immense. As the UNHCR described in July 2000, there are [historical connections](#) between today's ADF and the Tabliq sect as the latter is often serving the former through recruiting youth:

- The Tabliqs are a "sect of puritanical Muslims whose members portray themselves as 'Moslem evangelists'. In Uganda, the Tabliqs claimed Moslems were being marginalized by the government. Together with the obscure and largely defunct National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), the Tabliqs moved to western Uganda to start the rebellion

under the [Allied Democratic Forces] ADF umbrella. They set up rear bases in neighboring Congo where they began recruiting and training fighters with the promise of money and education. It was easier to recruit in the Congo where people were not hostile to the ADF".

ADF has committed suicide bombings in Uganda, some of which were probably coordinated from eastern DRC - the stronghold of ADF. In terms of actual presence, today, even though ADF has no strong presence in Uganda, it can be said that the Tabliqs have successfully created an environment that is hostile to Christians, especially in areas where Muslims are the majority. In the future, as long as the central government remains strong and there are no other emerging conflicts, the impact of the ADF on Ugandan Christians will remain low. However, the pressure that ordinary Muslims and Tabliq clerics are putting on Christians will remain high, especially in the eastern part of the country and around the DRC border.

### **Dictatorial paranoia**

The Ugandan government is known for suppressing human rights. The country is not a democracy. The president has been ruling the country for well over thirty years by silencing his opponents. In January 2021, Museveni again won another term as president in an election which was marred by irregularities and the intimidation of opposition candidates.

Christians who do not support the government often face restrictions. Churches are under constant monitoring and surveillance. This pattern is likely to continue.

### **External Links - Persecution Dynamics**

- Persecution engines description: remove the presidential age limit - <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/uganda-bill-eliminating-presidential-age-limit-and-extending-parliamentary-term-passed/>
- Block 5.9: Christians have experienced interference when choosing their own religious leaders. (3.00 points): extensive criteria - <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2019/11/5/ugandan-pastors-reject-policy-requiring-official-training-to-start-a-church>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: statistics - <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/africa/uganda#1>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: Very few rape cases - <https://uganda.savethechildren.net/news/ending-impunity-getting-children-justice-sexual-violence>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: gangs - <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/gangs-dominate-secondary-schools-in-mbale-town-survey-?districtId=565>
- Future outlook: historical connections - <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad7c7c.html>

### **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=Uganda>
- <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/Uganda>