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# Mozambique: Full Country Dossier

January 2023



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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[research@od.org](mailto:research@od.org)

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# Introduction

## World Watch List 2023

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	96	94	94	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.7	92	91	92	92	91
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.9	89	88	87	85	86
4	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.7	12.2	89	88	88	87	86
5	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.1	16.3	9.1	88	91	92	90	87
6	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.6	14.8	14.4	16.7	88	87	85	80	80
7	Pakistan	13.4	13.8	14.8	14.8	12.9	16.7	86	87	88	88	87
8	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.8	15.8	16.5	10.7	86	85	86	85	85
9	Afghanistan	15.4	15.7	15.4	16.1	16.6	4.6	84	98	94	93	94
10	Sudan	14.1	14.2	14.9	14.9	15.5	9.4	83	79	79	85	87
11	India	12.3	13.1	13.0	14.8	13.3	15.7	82	82	83	83	83
12	Syria	13.2	14.1	13.6	14.1	14.1	11.3	80	78	81	82	82
13	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.9	15.8	16.7	2.4	80	81	78	79	77
14	Myanmar	12.5	11.6	13.9	13.9	12.9	15.4	80	79	74	73	71
15	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.8	16.0	16.4	0.2	77	77	77	78	78
16	China	12.9	10.0	12.7	14.5	15.6	11.1	77	76	74	70	65
17	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	10.3	15.1	15.0	76	70	67	66	68
18	Iraq	14.1	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	4.6	76	78	82	76	79
19	Algeria	14.1	14.1	11.5	13.7	15.1	4.8	73	71	70	73	70
20	Mauritania	14.5	14.2	13.3	14.1	14.2	1.3	72	70	71	68	67
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	13.9	12.7	15.6	1.5	71	71	71	73	74
22	Colombia	11.8	8.9	13.1	11.3	10.4	15.4	71	68	67	62	58
23	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.5	9.6	13.8	15.6	71	68	67	66	48
24	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	12.2	15.6	70	68	66	68	70
25	Vietnam	11.8	9.6	12.8	14.6	14.4	6.9	70	71	72	72	70
26	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	14.1	15.7	0.6	70	69	70	70	69
27	Cuba	13.1	8.3	13.1	13.2	14.9	7.0	70	66	62	52	49
28	Niger	9.4	9.5	14.5	7.7	13.1	15.4	70	68	62	60	52
29	Morocco	13.2	13.8	10.9	12.2	14.5	4.8	69	69	67	66	63
30	Bangladesh	12.6	10.7	12.8	11.3	10.6	10.7	69	68	67	63	58
31	Laos	11.7	10.2	13.3	14.2	14.0	5.0	68	69	71	72	71
32	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.6	68	65	63	43	43
33	Indonesia	11.3	12.0	11.6	11.1	9.2	12.8	68	68	63	60	65
34	Qatar	14.2	14.1	10.5	13.2	14.4	1.5	68	74	67	66	62
35	Egypt	12.7	13.5	11.6	12.1	10.8	7.0	68	71	75	76	76
36	Tunisia	12.0	12.8	10.4	12.0	13.5	6.5	67	66	67	64	63
37	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	13.0	15.6	67	66	64	56	55
38	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	11.0	10.5	13.9	67	65	64	60	61
39	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.4	12.1	10.6	66	66	65	63	65
40	Bhutan	13.2	12.3	11.6	13.9	14.2	1.1	66	67	64	61	64
41	Turkey	12.8	11.5	11.8	13.0	11.5	5.7	66	65	69	63	66
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	1.5	66	63	62	57	56
43	Malaysia	12.8	14.3	11.4	12.2	11.1	3.9	66	63	63	62	60
44	Tajikistan	13.8	12.2	12.3	12.8	13.4	1.1	66	65	66	65	65
45	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.9	65	65	64	60	54
46	Brunei	14.8	14.6	10.1	10.9	14.4	0.4	65	64	64	63	63
47	Oman	14.0	14.1	10.3	13.3	12.9	0.6	65	66	63	62	59
48	Kazakhstan	13.2	11.6	11.9	12.7	14.2	1.1	65	64	64	64	63
49	Jordan	13.0	14.0	10.5	12.3	12.7	2.0	65	66	64	64	65
50	Nicaragua	10.8	5.9	11.9	12.8	13.6	9.4	65	56	51	41	41

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
51	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.3	64	63	62	61	61
52	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	64	63	62	60
53	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.6	63	61	58	55	52
54	UAE	13.4	13.4	9.9	11.2	12.8	1.1	62	62	62	60	58
55	Nepal	12.0	9.8	9.4	13.0	12.6	4.4	61	64	66	64	64
56	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.3	0.6	60	59	56	56	56
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.3	9.7	10.3	12.0	2.0	60	59	58	60	57
58	Azerbaijan	13.2	10.0	9.5	12.0	13.6	0.6	59	60	56	57	57
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.2	11.0	10.4	12.0	2.0	59	58	58	57	56
60	Chad	11.6	8.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	7.6	58	55	53	56	48
61	Russian Federation	12.3	7.9	10.3	11.8	12.8	2.0	57	56	57	60	60
62	Sri Lanka	12.8	9.1	10.6	11.3	9.5	3.9	57	63	62	65	58
63	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	11.7	8.9	57	50	42	42	41
64	Venezuela	6.0	4.6	11.7	10.2	11.4	11.7	56	51	39	42	41
65	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	11.1	55	52	48	48	43
66	Bahrain	12.7	13.3	8.7	10.7	8.8	0.9	55	57	56	55	55
67	Honduras	7.1	5.0	11.9	7.6	9.8	11.9	53	48	46	39	38
68	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	7.2	52	51	46	43	42
69	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	9.2	14.8	51	48	47	48	47
70	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	11.0	5.4	49	44	43	41	42
71	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	3.0	48	43	47	45	46
72	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	7.6	15.0	46	43	43	44	44
73	El Salvador	7.7	4.2	10.6	7.4	9.1	6.7	46	45	42	38	30
74	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	3.3	44	42	42	42	43
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	1.1	44	44	43	43	43
76	Belarus	9.5	3.8	4.8	9.4	12.1	3.3	43	33	30	28	35

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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 2023 reporting period was 1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022.
- 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).

# WWL 2023 Situation in brief / Mozambique

## Brief country details

Mozambique: Population (UN estimate for 2022)	Christians	Chr%
33,089,000	18,589,000	56.2

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

## Map of country



Mozambique: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	68	32
WWL 2022	65	41
WWL 2021	63	45
WWL 2020	43	66
WWL 2019	43	65

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods

## Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Mozambique: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Islamic oppression	Violent religious groups, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, One's own (extended) family, Organized crime cartels or networks, Non-Christian religious leaders
Organized corruption and crime	Organized crime cartels or networks
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials
Clan oppression	Ethnic group leaders

*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 Mozambique are experiencing serious difficulties due to the following factors:

- Radical Islamic attacks have claimed the lives of many Christians.
- The presence of drug cartels in some areas is making the lives of Christians difficult. This especially affects church youth workers.
- The government is restricting freedom of religion.

## Summary of international obligations and rights violations

Mozambique has committed to respect and protect fundamental rights in the following international treaties:

1. [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR)
2. [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (CAT)
3. [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW)
4. [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC)

Mozambique is not fulfilling its international obligations by regularly violating or failing to protect the following rights of Christians:

- In the North, Christians are killed for their faith (ICCPR Art. 6)
- Christian women are raped and abducted (ICCPR Art. 7)
- Christian women are forcibly married (ICCPR Art. 23 and CEDAW Art. 16)
- Converts to Christianity suffer from discrimination and violence in the north (ICCPR Arts. 18 and 26).

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

- **6 September 2022:** [Violent Islamic militants](#) beheaded at least six people and shot an 83 years old nun for faith related reasons (Reuters, 7 September 2022).
- **Abductions:** Islamic militants have been kidnapping women and young girls in [Cabo Delgado](#). It has been reported that over 600 people have been abducted in the past four years and some of these are Christians, as confirmed by local researchers (DW, 12 July 2021).
- **Attacks:** Many churches and Christian properties have been [destroyed or damaged](#) (Crux, 28 January 2022).

## Specific examples of positive developments

- The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Rwanda sent troops to help Mozambique's army fight the jihadists in Cabo Delgado province. As a result, the jihadists have been forced to withdraw from some of the towns and locations they occupied earlier.
- Some Muslim leaders have been condemning the attacks on civilians by the jihadists, making the case that the Muslim community in Mozambique does not condone their brutal behavior.

## External Links - Situation in brief

- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>
- Summary of international obligations and rights violations: Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Violent Islamic militants - <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/least-six-mozambicans-beheaded-italian-nun-shot-dead-by-insurgents-2022-09-07/>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: Cabo Delgado - <https://www.dw.com/en/mozambique-jihadis-kidnap-600-women-girls-since-2018-report/a-60041923>
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: destroyed or damaged - <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-africa/2022/01/bishop-in-cabo-delgado-the-attacks-on-the-villages-continue>



# WWL 2023: Keys to understanding / Mozambique

## Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International 2021/22 country report – covering 154 countries	AI country report 2021/22 (pp. 261-263)	<a href="https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf">https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf</a>	20 June 2022
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13890416">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13890416</a>	20 June 2022
Bertelsmann Transformation Index country report 2022 – covering 137 countries	BTI report 2022	<a href="https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/MOZ">https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/MOZ</a>	20 June 2022
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	<a href="https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mozambique/">https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mozambique/</a>	20 June 2022
Crisis24 country report (Garda World) – covering 193 countries	Crisis24 country report	<a href="https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/mozambique">https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/mozambique</a>	20 June 2022
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2021 – covering 167 countries	EIU 2021 (p. 58)	<a href="https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf">https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf</a>	20 June 2022
FFP's Fragile States Index 2022 – covering 179 countries	FSI 2022	<a href="https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/">https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/</a>	26 July 2022
Freedom House's 2022 Democracy index – covering 29 countries, Mozambique not included	Democracy Index 2022	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores</a>	
Freedom House's 2022 Global Freedom index – covering 210 countries	Global Freedom Index 2022	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/country/mozambique/freedom-world/2022">https://freedomhouse.org/country/mozambique/freedom-world/2022</a>	20 June 2022
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2022 report – covering 70 countries, Mozambique not included	Freedom on the Net 2022	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores</a>	
Human Rights Watch World Report 2022 (country chapter) – covering 100+ countries	HRW 2022 country chapter	<a href="https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/mozambique">https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/mozambique</a>	20 June 2022
Internet World Stats 2022	IWS 2022	<a href="https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#mz">https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#mz</a>	20 June 2022
RSF's 2022 World Press Freedom Index – covering 180 countries	World Press Freedom 2022	<a href="https://rsf.org/en/mozambique">https://rsf.org/en/mozambique</a>	20 June 2022
Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index – covering 180 countries	CPI 2021	<a href="https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/moz">https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/moz</a>	20 June 2022
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators (country profile) – covering 189 countries	HDI profile	<a href="https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/MOZ">https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/MOZ</a>	20 June 2022
US State Department's 2021 International Religious Freedom (country profile)	IRFR 2021	<a href="https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/mozambique/">https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/mozambique/</a>	20 June 2022
USCIRF 2022 country reports – covering 15 CPC / 12 SWL, Mozambique not included	USCIRF 2022	<a href="https://www.uscirf.gov/countries">https://www.uscirf.gov/countries</a>	
World Bank country overview – covering 178 countries	World Bank overview 2022	<a href="https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mozambique/overview">https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mozambique/overview</a>	20 June 2022
World Bank country profile data – covering 222 countries	World Bank profile (2020 data)	<a href="https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&amp;b450fd57tbar=ydd=yinf=nzm=ncountry=MOZ">https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&amp;b450fd57tbar=ydd=yinf=nzm=ncountry=MOZ</a>	20 June 2022
World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 – covering 147 countries (divided per region)	Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 (pp. 62-63)	<a href="https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f6c5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf">https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f6c5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf</a>	20 June 2022

## Recent history

After almost five centuries as a Portuguese colony, Mozambique became independent in 1975. There followed large-scale emigration, economic dependence on South Africa, a severe drought and a prolonged civil war, which all served to hinder the country's development until the mid-1990s.

The ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique party (FRELIMO) formally abandoned Marxism in 1989, and a new constitution the following year provided for multi-party elections and a free market economy. A UN-negotiated peace agreement between FRELIMO and rebel Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) forces ended the fighting in 1992. In 2004, Mozambique underwent a delicate transition as Joaquim Chissano stepped down after 18 years in office as president. His elected successor, Armando Guebuza, served two terms and then passed executive power to Filipe Nyusi in 2015.

Long considered to be a post-conflict success story, Mozambique currently finds itself in a period of uncertainty, with past political progress and current economic opportunities threatened by unresolved tensions. After a period of post-war reconstruction, the country enjoyed steady and solid economic progress. GDP growth averaged between 7 and 8 percent for the past decade, and the discovery of significant reserves of coal and gas has driven robust foreign investment. Yet beneath strong [economic growth](#) and political progress marked by five consecutive multi-party elections, problems such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and political violence persist (World Politics Review, 21 January 2016).

Economic prosperity has been undermined since the return of political instability and violence in 2012. That year, renewed tensions between RENAMO and the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) called into question the political progress made since 1992, worrying investors and tarnishing the country's image as a post-war success story. RENAMO's residual armed forces have intermittently engaged in a low-level insurgency since 2012, although a late December 2016 ceasefire held throughout 2017. [Fighting erupted again](#) in 2019 when FRELIMO remained in power after disputed election results (All Africa, 20 April 2020).

Meanwhile, violent Islamic militants have been attacking the civilian population in the northern part of the country. Christians are heavily affected and have been fleeing from their homes to avoid being targeted by jihadists. At the same time coalition forces from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Rwanda (together with advisors from other nations) have had success in pushing the jihadists back. On the other hand, the the impact of jihadists is expanding to the south despite the success of the government and its allies against the jihadists.

## Political and legal landscape

Mozambique has gone through tumultuous times. After independence in 1975, the Mozambique National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana; RENAMO) was created. "Internal conflict raged throughout Mozambique from the late 1970s until 1992. Throughout this period FRELIMO remained Mozambique's sole political party. Multi-party elections began in 1994 but FRELIMO and RENAMO continue to be the major parties, alongside a handful of others. Universal suffrage was guaranteed by the 1990 Constitution. By the early 21st century, [women](#) had begun to serve in significant numbers in the Assembly of the Republic and on the Council of Ministers, and in 2004 Luisa Diogo was named prime minister - the first woman to hold the post in Mozambique" (Britannica, last accessed 20 January 2023).

In May 2018, parliament made steps towards greater decentralization by approving constitutional reforms allowing the indirect election of provincial governors, district administrators and mayors. In October 2019, presidential, legislative, and provincial elections were held across the country, which was the country's sixth successive general election since the introduction of multiparty elections in 1994. FRELIMO won the presidency and the national parliament. FRELIMO also secured a majority in all 10 provinces, thus electing governors for each province.

In the October 2019 presidential election, incumbent President Nyusi won with a [landslide](#) victory (France24, 27 October 2019) but opposition RENAMO rejected the result and called for [rerun](#) accusing the "government of using violence and intimidation on election day" (Al-Jazeera, 19 October 2019). However, the country's top court [dismissed](#) this (Reuters, 15 November 2019).

According to Freedom House's Global Freedom Index 2022:

- "in August 2021, the corruption trial began for the perpetrators of the 2016 "dividas ocultas" ("hidden debts") scandal, when three companies secretly and illegally received a more than \$2 billion loan. Nineteen defendants – former high-level government officials, former finance minister Manuel Chang, and the son of a former president – have been charged with corruption. President Filipe Nyusi, who was minister of defense at the time,

has been cited by multiple defendants as having played a prominent role. In November 2021, a South African court ruled that Chang should be extradited to the United States, where he was indicted in a New York district court in 2018; Chang had been imprisoned in South Africa since 2018.”

- The Mozambican government is known to retaliate against journalists who criticize it – journalists and political commentators appearing on television programs have been the targets of attacks and kidnappings in recent years. Police frequently harass, assault, and detain journalists - in October 2021, police officers assaulted a reporter in Maputo after covering a traffic accident, demanding that he erase video footage on his phone.

### Gender perspective

Women remain particularly vulnerable within Mozambique’s political and legal system. The [2004 Family Law \(Article 7\)](#) is the overarching legal framework for marriage and provides for equal rights for both women and men to enter marriage and file for divorce. Many women in informal or de facto unions however, have uncertain legal rights. The practice of ‘widow purification’ (*pita-kufa*) continues, whereby widows are forced to have sex with a relative of her deceased husband’s family ([BMC International Health and Human Rights, 18\(1\) September 2018](#)), as does the practice of land and property grabbing from widows ([OECD, 2019](#)). The minimum legal age for marriage is set at 18, although marriages can occur from the age of 16 with the consent of the court, parent or guardian (Family Law, 2004, Art. 19). Mozambique has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world, with 48% of girls marrying by the age of 18 ([Girls Not Brides, 2020](#)). The Law on Domestic Violence Perpetrated Against Women Act, introduced in 2009, was an important step in providing protection for victims, particularly as it specifically addressed marital rape. Effectively implementing legislation in practice, however, remains an ongoing issue ([Jetha et al, BMC Public Health 21\(1\), April 2021](#)).

### Religious landscape

Mozambique: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	18,589,000	56.2
Muslim	5,859,000	17.7
Hindu	50,200	0.2
Buddhist	3,200	0.0
Ethno-religionist	8,428,000	25.5
Jewish	200	0.0
Bahai	4,300	0.0
Atheist	26,000	0.1
Agnostic	123,000	0.4
Other	6,600	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 2022)

The South Asian immigrant population and the northern provinces are predominantly Muslim, particularly along the coast, while some areas of the northern interior have a stronger concentration of Christian communities. Christians are more numerous in the southern and central regions, but Muslims also live in these areas.

What the US State Department wrote in its [2010 International Religious Freedom Report](#) is still valid today: "Muslim journalists reported that the distinction between Sunni and Shi'a was not particularly important for many local Muslims, and Muslims were much more likely to identify themselves by the local religious leader they follow than as Sunni or Shi'a. There were significant differences between the practices of Muslims of African origin and those of South Asian background. In addition African Muslim clerics have increasingly sought training in Egypt, Kuwait, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia, returning with a more fundamental approach than the local traditional, Sufi-inspired Swahili Islam particularly common in the north."

Mozambique has a fast growing Evangelical population, but many small churches that have split off from mainstream denominations have fused African indigenous beliefs and practices within a Christian framework. (Some Muslim communities also continue to perform indigenous rituals.) Reports show that the government of Mozambique is [concerned about](#) the emergence of such smaller churches and has been planning for some time to put stricter regulations in place (Club of Mozambique, 30 May 2019).

## Economic landscape

Mozambique has an overall economic freedom score of 51.3 in the Heritage Foundation's [2022 Index of Economic Freedom](#) (a 0.3 decrease from previous index), making its economy the 142nd freest in the 2022 Index. The country's economic freedom is ranked 32nd among 47 countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, with an overall score below the regional and world averages.

According to World Bank's 2022 Macro Poverty Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa (pp. 62-63):

- **Economic growth:** Growth reached 2.2 percent in 2021, driven by increased agricultural and services output. "Growth is projected at 3.6 percent in 2022, before peaking at 6 percent in 2023. The start of production at the Coral South offshore is expected to boost exports. Agricultural output growth is expected to remain considerable, given favorable weather conditions, and services activities will continue to steadily recover."
- **Poverty:** "The loss of income and employment due to the pandemic meant that the poverty rate remained unchanged at 63.5 percent in 2021, but the number of poor increased by 650,000, totaling 20.4 million as of end-2021." The Rate of poverty is expected to remain over 63 percent in 2022, despite the growth recovery and increased social transfers.
- **Debt:** "Total public debt dropped from 125 to 117 percent of GDP in 2021, largely due to the currency appreciation. The currency appreciation and debt service deferral under the DSSI helped to lower the country's debt service obligations, which in turn caused reduction of the public debt. "Mozambique is in debt distress with debt assessed to be sustainable in a forward-looking sense."
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** "Recovering trade has led to a stable current account deficit (CAD). The CAD declined from 25.7 to 22% of GDP between 2020 and 2021. The drop was mainly driven by lower imports of services". "The CAD is expected to reach 32.5% of GDP in

2022, and stay close to 40% in 2023-2024 owing to increased imports of services and machinery”.

According to the World Bank country overview, a modest recovery is underway in Mozambique:

- “Mozambique saw its first economic contraction in almost three decades in 2020, owing to the pandemic that hit the services and extractive sectors hard. The modest growth rebound in 2021 reflects a combined outcome of agricultural growth and relatively strong recovery in services, on the one hand, and weak performance in extractives and manufacturing, on the other. The growth prospects are positive, supported by the gradual global recovery and LNG and agriculture developments. Growth is expected to accelerate in the medium term, averaging 5.5% between 2022 and 2024, mainly reflecting natural gas (LNG) production. Coral-South’s offshore LNG project plans to start production in 2022 and will likely achieve full capacity between 2023 and 2024. However, substantial downside risks remain, including rising international oil and wheat prices owing to the Ukraine conflict, further waves of COVID-19 infections, natural disasters, and deterioration in the security situation in the North, which may increase public spending pressures, among others.”

According to [Moody's Analytics](#) (Economy overview, accessed 26 July 2022):

- "At independence in 1975, Mozambique was one of the world's poorest countries. Socialist policies, economic mismanagement and a brutal civil war from 1977 to 1992 further impoverished the country. In 1987, the government embarked on a series of macro-economic reforms designed to stabilize the economy." In spite of improvements, "about half the population remains below the poverty line and subsistence agriculture continues to employ the vast majority of the country's workforce."
- Mozambique's once substantial foreign debt was reduced through various initiatives. "However, in 2016 information surfaced revealing that the Mozambican government was holding over \$2 billion in government-backed loans secured between 2012-14 by state-owned defense and security companies without parliamentary approval or national budget inclusion. This prompted the IMF and international donors to halt direct budget support to the government. An international audit was performed on Mozambique’s debt in 2016-17".

Mozambique's development and economic strength are constrained by social considerations including very low wealth levels and limited access to quality basic services such as education, health care, access to roads and electricity, and pervasive poverty.

### **Gender perspective**

Women are typically more economically vulnerable in Mozambique. Whilst Articles 66 and 213 of the Civil Code allow for equal inheritance rights for both genders, customary practices commonly deny women and girls their due inheritance ([OECD, 2019](#)). The female labor force participation rate is high, with 77.3% of women in the workplace, compared to 79% of men (UNDP's HDI 2020). However, women have more limited access to formal financial inclusion instruments than men and are more likely to be working in the informal sector ([LSE, March 2018](#)).

## Social and cultural landscape

According to the UNDP's Human Development Indicators (HDI profile) and CIA Factbook:

- **Main ethnic groups:** 99% of Mozambicans are descended from indigenous tribes (Makhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, Sena, Chokwe, Manyika, and Sau), Mestizo 0.8%, other 0.2% (includes European, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese) (CIA 2017 est.)
- **Main languages:** Makhuwa 26.1%, Portuguese (official) 16.6%, Tsonga 8.6%, Nyanja 8.1%, Sena 7.1%, Lomwe 7.1%, Chuwabo 4.7%, Ndau 3.8%, Tswa 3.8%, other Mozambican languages 11.8%, other 0.5%, unspecified 1.8% (CIA 2017 est.). English is also spoken in major cities such as Maputo and Beira.
- **Median age:** 17 years
- **Urban population:** 38.2% of total population (CIA 2022 est.)
- **Expected years of schooling:** 10 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (def. 15 years and older can read and write):** 60.7%
- **Employment to population ratio (15 years and older):** 75.6%
- **Unemployment, total (% of labor force):** 3.2% (UNDP 2020 est.)
- **Unemployment, youth (15-24 years of age):** 6.9% (UNDP 2020 est.)

According to [OCHA, Key messages on the Humanitarian situation - July 2022](#):

- **IDPs:** 946,508

"Since the beginning of the year [2022], the number of people displaced has continued to rise steadily in northern Mozambique, deepening the needs of displaced people and host communities. There were an estimated 946,508 people who have left their homes (June), up from 784,564 in the last IOM/DTM round of February. This represents a net increase of approximately 100,000 IDPs. In addition, another 62,228 IDPs were recorded in newly assessed locations and sites, most especially in northern Cabo Delgado districts. Since early June, a string of attacks in Ancuabe and Chiure districts led to the displacement of 92,000 people within Cabo Delgado and to Nampula provinces. Attacks have taken place in areas where no security incidents had been reported in the last two years."

"At least 1.5 million people in northern Mozambique need life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian assistance and protection due to the continued impact of armed conflict, violence and insecurity in Cabo Delgado province. More than half of them are children and more than 60 percent of adults are women, who fled horrific brutality in search of safety."

According to [UNHCR Mozambique Fact Sheet, May 2022](#) (published 8 June 2022):

- **Refugees:** 29,882

"As of April 2022, there were 29,882 refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Mozambique, of which, 9,124 live in the Maratane settlement in Nampula Province, the country's only formal settlement, while more than 20,500 reside in urban areas throughout the country. Established in November 2020, Corrane is the only formal IDP site hosting around 1,400 families."

One year earlier, as of April 2021, 732,000 persons were displaced in the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala and Zambezia due to continuous attacks by armed groups in the north-eastern Mozambique and Cyclone Eloise which struck in January 2021. As of June 2021, 70,000 people from Palma were forcibly displaced in the aftermath of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) attacks in March. Between January and June 2021, over 9,600 Mozambican asylum seekers were forcibly returned from Tanzania. More than 70% of the displaced were women and children.

According to the UN Human Development Indicators (HDI profile):

- **Human Development Index:** Mozambique ranked 181st out of 189 countries with a value of 0.456.
- **Average life expectancy at birth:** 60.9 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.912 (world: 0.943)
- **Gender inequality index (GII):** 0.523 (world: 0.436). Mozambique ranks 127th out of 162 countries.

According to [Moody's Analytics](#), People & Society, Demographic profile (accessed 26 July 2022):

- "Mozambique is a poor, sparsely populated country with high fertility and mortality rates. About 45% of the population is younger than 15. Mozambique's high poverty rate is caused by natural disasters, disease, high population growth, low agricultural productivity, and unequal distribution of wealth. The country's birth rate is among the world's highest, averaging more than 5 children per woman (and higher in rural areas) for at least the last three decades. The sustained high level of fertility reflects gender inequality, low contraceptive use, early marriages and childbearing, and a lack of education, particularly among women."

### Gender perspective

As noted in a [2019 CEDAW report](#), discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices persist in Mozambique, including polygamy, child marriage, female genital mutilation and accusations of witchcraft against women. The report further highlights the widespread impunity for such practices and the lack of convictions in cases of child marriage. Stark regional differences in the rates of child marriage across Mozambique suggest that sociocultural factors play a significant role; rates are highest in Northern and Central regions ([OECD, 2019](#)).

Within the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the rate of child marriages has reportedly increased, driven partly by the closure of schools ([UNICEF, Child marriage in COVID-19 contexts, 2021, p.1](#)). Lockdowns also served to exacerbate gender-based violence and domestic violence ([Club of Mozambique, 2 September 2020](#)). To try and combat child marriage, traditional leaders – widely understood to be the guardians of social practices and norms – have been invited to work alongside government and social organizations through a joint forum ([Club of Mozambique, 29 March 2021](#)).

## Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2022):

- **Internet usage:** 19.9% of the population - survey date December 2021 (most recent survey at time of writing)
- **Facebook usage:** 8.9% of the population – survey date January 2022

According to the World Bank country profile:

- **Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 hundred people):** 49.5. The [GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report \(2020\)](#) shows that Mozambique has a gender gap of 17% in relation to mobile phone ownership, and a gender gap of 39% in relation to mobile Internet users. Mozambique was (along with six other Sub-Saharan African countries) in the ten countries that reported the largest gains in women's cell phone use on [Georgetown's Women, Peace and Security Index \(2019/20, p.35\)](#).

Mozambique had been through a war for independence and its own civil war. Thus, it is not surprising to see the country not having advanced technology and infrastructure. The communication infrastructure is developing.

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (updated 1 June 2022):

- "Mobile, fixed-line and broadband penetration rates remain far below the average for the region."
- "In recent years the government has enforced the registration of SIM cards, but with varying success. At the end of 2016 almost five million unregistered SIM cards were deactivated but poor monitoring meant that the process was revisited in mid-2019 and again in late 2020."

"The high cost of international bandwidth had long hampered internet use, though the landing of two international submarine cables (SEACOM and EASSy) has reduced the cost of bandwidth and so led to drastic reductions in broadband retail prices as well as a significant jump in available bandwidth."

According to the CIA Factbook:

- "The mobile segment has shown strong growth given competition; poor fixed-line infrastructure means most Internet access is through mobile accounts; DSL, cable broadband, 3G and some fiber broadband available; LTE tests underway; roll out of national fiber backbone and upgrades to infrastructure; submarine cables reduced the cost of bandwidth".
- "The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on production and supply chains globally; since 2020, some aspects of the telecom sector have experienced downturn, particularly in mobile device production; many network operators delayed upgrades to infrastructure; progress towards 5G implementation was postponed or slowed."



## Security situation

From October 2017 onwards, there have been recurrent attacks in the north by Islamic militants who have killed many Christians and burned down Christian homes. In addition, the Islamist group *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ) has called for the removal of Christian symbols and has attacked houses belonging to Christians in some parts of Cabo Delgado Province.

According to the CIA Factbook:

- “Mozambique is facing an insurgency driven by militants with ties to the Islamic State terrorist group (ISIS-Mozambique, which was declared a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US State Department in March 2021) in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, an area known for rich liquid natural gas deposits; insurgent attacks in the province began in 2017 and as of 2022, the fighting had left an estimated 3,000 dead and over 700,000 displaced; the Armed Defense Forces of Mozambique (FADM) is widely assessed as lacking the training, equipment, and overall capabilities to address the insurgency; as of early 2022, several countries from the Southern Africa Development Community and the European Union, as well as Rwanda and the US were providing various forms of military assistance; African countries have provided approximately 3,000 troops.”

According to [International Crisis Group's June 2022 update](#):

- “Islamist insurgents advanced into Cabo Delgado province’s southern districts, threatening provincial capital Pemba as Islamic State made unprecedented number of claims.”
- “Insurgents throughout month moved southward into Cabo Delgado districts which had not seen any major attacks since insurgency started in Oct 2017. In Ancuabe district, insurgents 5 June attacked Nanduli village, with at least four people reported missing; Islamic State (ISIS) next day claimed attack. Insurgents continued to move south: two people beheaded 8 June on graphite mining site 60km from provincial capital Pemba, another civilian killed next day in Ntutupue village; up to seven people including two security officers killed 18-19 June in Nikuita and Macaia villages; and four more in Mihecani village 23-26 June. ISIS 13 June claimed Ntutupue attack. Violence in Ancuabe 5-19 June triggered displacement of over 20,000 people. Insurgency advanced further south into Chiure district, previously considered safe haven for refugees. Notably, ISIS 12-13 June claimed killing four civilians and burning down houses in Retene and Micolene villages. Attack also reported in Mecufi district’s Mancuaia village 14 June.”
- “Insurgents’ incursions into Cabo Delgado’s south sparked security concerns in Pemba, which serves as logistical hub for Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). Security forces 12 June introduced checkpoints and military escorts along Metuge-Pemba road; local sources 13 June reported traffic restrictions across Chiure and Ancuabe districts; President Nyusi 16 June met with senior military, SAMIM and Rwandan officials to discuss further military operations. Neighbouring Nampula province, south of Cabo Delgado, experienced its first attack as combatants 17

June beheaded civilian in Lúrio village, Memba district. Insurgents continued to engage with security forces and target civilians in northern and central Cabo Delgado. Notably, in Macomia district, ISIS 7 June claimed raid on Chai village, reportedly kidnapping several children; clashes between insurgents and security forces reported around 9 June outside Quinto Congresso village and between Nkoe and Chai villages, with unknown number killed; attacks in Nkoe 21 and 23 June reportedly left four dead. Insurgents 25 June killed at least one civilian in ambush in Mocímboa da Praia district, and 28 June attacked Mandimba military outpost in Nangade district.”

### **Gender perspective**

According to a report by World Vision, sexual violence against children is on the rise in Mozambique, with 99% of rape cases affecting girls ([Club of Mozambique, 25 November 2020](#)). This rise has been linked to increasing unemployment of parents and guardians, displacement, and attacks by militias. As reported by Amnesty international, the jihadists abduct both boys and girls, to become soldiers and wives respectively, or for the purpose of sexual assault ([Amnesty International News, 2 March 2021](#)). Gender-based violence has also increased within Mozambique’s fragile context; women and girls are broadly understood to be the demographic most disproportionately affected by conflict ([Georgetown, 2019/20, p.52](#); [Africa Renewal, 24 February 2021](#)). In 2019, reports indicated that community leaders of displaced populations coerced women into exchanging sex for aid ([HRW, 25 April 2019](#)).

Amnesty International’s Report 2021/22 (pp. 261-262) states:

- "Violence against women and girls remained rampant, with few measures taken to hold perpetrators accountable: revelations emerged in June that the wardens of the Ndlavela Women’s Prison in Maputo province had created an elaborate scheme for sexual abuse and exploitation of prisoners for years; in March, a man brutally killed his wife with an iron bar, alleging she had been drinking beer with a male neighbor; in April, a man beat his wife to death because he suspected she had had an affair; in July, a man tied up his wife, poured petrol on her and set fire to her because he suspected her of infidelity; in September, a school janitor sexually assaulted a 16-year-old girl on her way to school, after threatening her with physical violence; in August, a human resources manager at a primary school was found sexually assaulting a 14-year-old schoolgirl with autism. The police dismissed the case, but appeal by the girl’s family to the district Public Prosecutor ended up in getting the case assigned to the investigative police unit."

## Trends analysis

### 1) Government remains stable

Over the last years, Mozambique's government has been struggling hard to address the following areas:

- i) the fight against corruption and drug cartels;
- ii) keeping peace with the opposition, RENAMO;
- iii) upholding its commitment to international human rights.

In the country's general election that was held in October 2019, FRELIMO won a landslide victory, including the presidency, 71% of parliamentary seats and ten governorships. There have now been six successive elections with the participation of opposition parties and - despite certain limitations - this shows that the country is now moving away from its history of civil war and the leaders are taking the voting public seriously. This is a positive sign, although there is significant room for improvement. Yet, it is important to mention that Mozambique's substantial armed forces failed to contain the jihadist movement and had to rely on armies from Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Rwanda. There are also Wagner group mercenaries from Russia involved in the fighting.

### 2) There is danger that the Islamic insurgency will spread

The level of fear among Christians is rising due to the growing influence of the Islamist group *al-Sunnah wa Jama'ah* (ASWJ), especially in the north of the country. Under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the US government has designated the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The US embassy has sent Special Forces trainers to bolster the efforts of Mozambique's army and leaders of the regional bloc, SADC forces are also working to help restore stability in the area. Nevertheless, there is danger that the jihadists will be able spread their influence into other parts of the country, resulting in more insecurity, especially for Christians, as attacks in provinces outside Cabo Delgado have already been reported.

## External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: economic growth - <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/17725/political-tensions-threaten-mozambique-s-tenuous-peace>
- Recent history: Fighting - <https://allafrica.com/stories/201405170059.html>
- Recent history: erupted again - <https://allafrica.com/stories/201405170059.html>
- Political and legal landscape: women - <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mozambique/Political-process>
- Political and legal landscape: landslide - <https://www.france24.com/en/20191027-mozambique-s-president-nyusi-wins-second-term-opposition-rejects-results>
- Political and legal landscape: rerun - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/mozambique-opposition-rejects-election-results-191019135525946.html>
- Political and legal landscape: dismissed - <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1XP0WD-OZATP>
- Political and legal landscape: 2004 Family Law (Article 7) - <https://learningpartnership.org/resource/family-law-mozambique-document-portuguese>
- Political and legal landscape: BMC International Health and Human Rights, 18(1) September 2018) - [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327783638\\_HIV\\_prevention\\_Mapping\\_Mozambican\\_people%27s\\_views\\_on\\_the\\_acceptability\\_of\\_the\\_widow%27s\\_sexual\\_cleansing\\_ritual\\_called\\_pita-kufa](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327783638_HIV_prevention_Mapping_Mozambican_people%27s_views_on_the_acceptability_of_the_widow%27s_sexual_cleansing_ritual_called_pita-kufa)
- Political and legal landscape: OECD, 2019 - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/MZ.pdf>

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- Religious landscape description: 2010 International Religious Freedom Report - <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148708.htm>
- Religious landscape description: concerned about - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-government-seeking-to-put-religious-world-in-order/>
- Economic landscape: 2022 Index of Economic Freedom - <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/mozambique>
- Economic landscape: Moody's Analytics - <https://www.economy.com/mozambique/>
- Economic landscape: OECD, 2019 - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/MZ.pdf>
- Economic landscape: LSE, March 2018 - <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2018/03/12/womens-financial-inclusion-5-reasons-why-it-matters-for-mozambique/>
- Social and cultural landscape: OCHA, Key messages on the Humanitarian situation - July 2022 - <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/mozambique-key-messages-humanitarian-situation-july-2022>
- Social and cultural landscape: UNHCR Mozambique Fact Sheet, May 2022 - <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/unhcr-mozambique-fact-sheet-may-2022>
- Social and cultural landscape: Moody's Analytics - <https://www.economy.com/mozambique/>
- Social and cultural landscape: 2019 CEDAW report, - [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/MOZ/CO/3-5&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/MOZ/CO/3-5&Lang=En)
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- Technological landscape: - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mz.html>
- Security situation: International Crisis Group's June 2022 update - [https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=125&date\\_range=latest&from\\_month=01&from\\_year=2020&to\\_month=01&to\\_year=2022](https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=125&date_range=latest&from_month=01&from_year=2020&to_month=01&to_year=2022)
- Security situation: Club of Mozambique, 25 November 2020 - <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/sexual-assault-against-children-on-the-rise-in-mozambique-178231/>
- Security situation: Amnesty International News, 2 March 2021 - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/mozambique-civilians-killed-as-war-crimes-committed-by-armed-group-government-forces-and-private-military-contractors-new-report/>
- Security situation: Georgetown, 2019/20, p.52 - <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WPS-Index-2019-20-Report.pdf>
- Security situation: Africa Renewal, 24 February 2021 - <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/march-2021/turning-tide-women-and-girls-caught-mozambique%E2%80%99s-cabo-delgado-crisis>

- Security situation: HRW, 25 April 2019 - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/25/mozambique-cyclone-victims-forced-trade-sex-food>

## WWL 2023: Church information / Mozambique

### Christian origins

Christianity was introduced to Mozambique by Roman Catholic Dominicans in 1506. Jesuit and Augustinian monks later helped the Dominicans in establishing the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique. In 1881 Protestant Christianity came to the country through missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. As a result of the Berlin Treaty of 1885, the authorities became more open to admitting non-Catholic missionary personnel. In 1889, Bishop William Taylor of the Methodist Episcopal Church moved to the country.

### Church spectrum today

Mozambique: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	5,000	0.0
Catholic	7,728,000	41.6
Protestant	4,975,000	26.8
Independent	4,844,000	26.1
Unaffiliated	1,277,000	6.9
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-240,000	-1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,589,000</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	4,318,000	23.2
Renewalist movement	6,308,000	33.9

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

**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.

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2021), there are Roman Catholic, Evangelical/Pentecostal Christian, "Zionist Christian" and Anglican congregations (in descending order of denominational size) in the country.

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The persecution of Christians is severest in the northern Cabo Delgado province due to violent attacks by IS-affiliated militants.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** Expatriate Christians are not isolated from other Christian communities in Mozambique and are thus not treated as a separate category in WWL analysis.

**Historical Christian communities:** This category includes Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches. They are frequently targeted by ASWJ militants.

**Converts:** This category includes converts from Islam or traditional African religions to Christianity. Persecution is particularly severe if the convert is from a Muslim background in the Muslim-dominated northern part of the country; such converts are likely to be targets for attack by radicalized Muslims.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** This category includes Baptist, Pentecostal and various independent Christian groups. Due to their focus on outreach and evangelism, Christians in these churches are regularly threatened and attacked.

## WWL 2023: Persecution Dynamics / Mozambique

### Reporting period

1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022

### Position on the World Watch List

Mozambique: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	68	32
WWL 2022	65	41
WWL 2021	63	45
WWL 2020	43	66
WWL 2019	43	65

*Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods*

The 3-point increase in score in WWL 2023 was due to an increase in pressure on Christians, particularly in the northern part of the country where jihadists operate. In WWL 2023, even though Islamic militants lost control of many towns and cities due to operations carried out by forces belonging to Rwanda and Southern African states, their influence remained very high. Furthermore, the presence of drug cartels in some areas is making the lives of Christians difficult - especially for churches seeking to work with youth. Violence remained at the same extreme level as in WWL 2022 (15.6 points).

## Persecution engines

Mozambique: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Very strong
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
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	Medium

*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)

Islam is a minority-religion in Mozambique with main [centers](#) in the north (Pew Forum, accessed 1 December 2020). From October 2017 onwards, there have been recurrent attacks against Christians by Islamic militants, causing thousands of residents to flee their homes. It is not unlikely that this jihadist violence could expand southwards and also into neighboring Tanzania and Malawi.

### Clan oppression (Medium)

In some remote areas, adherents to the indigenous belief system see the rise in Christian evangelistic activities as a threat. As a result, community leaders often complain about such church action.

### Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

The Constitution declares the nation to be secular and also protects the right to practice or not practice religion. Political parties are prohibited from using names containing references to any religious denominations or churches, and from using emblems that may be confused with national or religious symbols. Moreover, the Constitution bans all religious influence in public educational institutions. The state bureaucratic system and institutions that have been in place for decades also impose cumbersome registration requirements for religious groups.

### Organized corruption and crime (Medium)

Mozambique faces a very significant problem with organized crime. Drugs, illegal wildlife products such as ivory and illegal arms are widely traded at ports. Islamist ASWJ has been involved in this illegal trade to fund the group's activities. The thriving drug-trafficking business

affects Christian communities where threats are issued and acts of violence take place, especially where Christian missionaries evangelize among the youth and among groups involved in the supply or use of drugs.

## Drivers of persecution

Mozambique:									
Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	VERY STRONG			MEDIUM				MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Government officials								Medium	
Ethnic group leaders				Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Medium								
Violent religious groups	Very strong								
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium			Weak					
One's own (extended) family	Medium			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. For more information see WWL Methodology.

### Drivers of Islamic oppression

- **Violent religious groups (Very strong):** Violent Islamic militants are the major drivers of persecution. They are believed to have strong ties with al-Shabaab in Somalia and to be followers of a strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam.
- **Organized crime cartels/networks (Medium):** Islamic militants are supported financially by working with drug cartels and through corruption involving some officials in the country.
- **Family (Medium):** In Muslim-dominated areas and in Muslim families, those who convert to Christianity face ostracization and discrimination.
- **Ordinary citizens (Medium):** All Christian groups in Muslim majority areas can face persecution from ordinary citizens and mobs. This is particularly true in the northern part of the country.

### Drivers of Clan oppression

- **Ethnic leaders (Medium):** In Mozambique, there are certain groups who follow the traditional belief system and/or mix it with Christianity and Islam. The drivers are clan leaders (sometimes overlapping with non-Christian religious leaders).



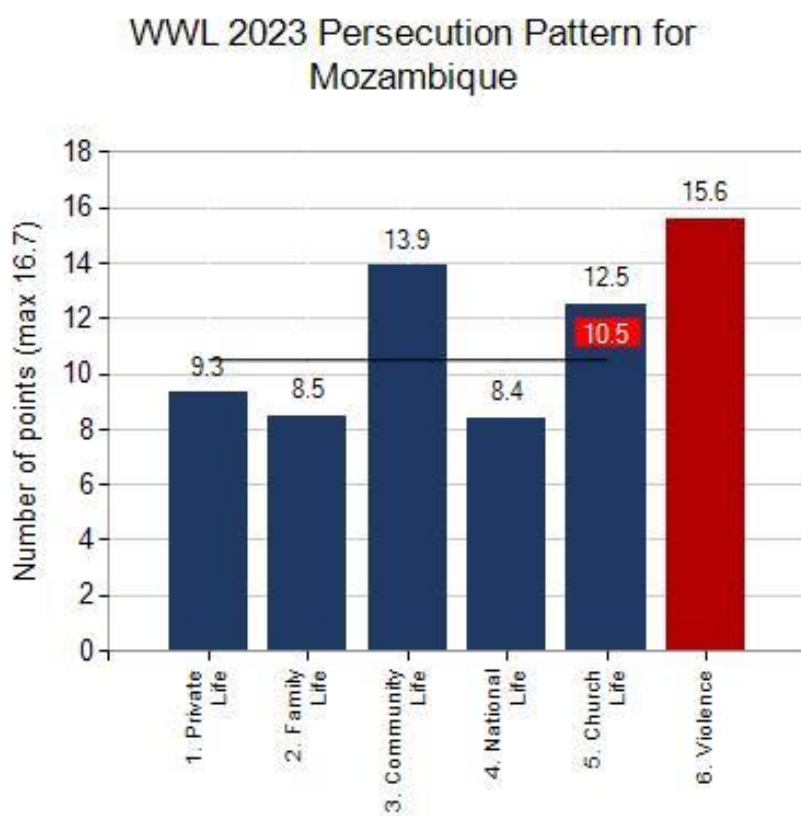
### Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** The government of Mozambique is not a true democracy. It is still repressive in many respects. It puts pressure on some church leaders and congregations to support government policies. It restricts freedom of association and freedom of expression.

### Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

- **Organized crime cartels and networks (Medium):** These groups threaten churches where these are involved in work among youth and criminal gangs. The country is also struggling to deal with the drug networks in the country.
- **Violent religious groups (Medium):** The stronger the Islamist groups become, the more Christians will be persecuted in Mozambique - as can be seen in the cases of Boko Haram and al-Shabaab elsewhere.

## The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2023 Persecution pattern for Mozambique shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Mozambique rose from 9.9 points in WWL 2022 to 10.5 points.
- Pressure is highest and at an extreme level in the *Community sphere* (13.9 points). Pressure is next highest in the *Church sphere* (12.5 points). This is an indication that church and community life in the northern part of the country is being highly affected

by the jihadist movement.

- Due to the jihadist attacks, the score for violence is at the extreme level of 15.6 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 2023 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 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.75 points)**

Christians in northern Mozambique have been facing immense pressure and violence in the past couple of years due to the emergence of jihadist groups. Homes, churches and other Christian buildings have become targets for attack. It is particularly dangerous for converts from a Muslim background to be seen worshipping.

**Block 1.5: It has been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols. (2.75 points)**

In northern Mozambique, in the areas where jihadists are active, showing any signs of Christianity is extremely dangerous. Indeed, Christian symbols have become a sign that attracts danger. Christians need to be wary of advertising their faith through displaying crosses etc. as these can provoke attack. In the WWL 2023 reporting period, jihadists have been going house-to-house in villages and burning schools, homes and churches.

**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.). (2.50 points)**

This issue should be seen in the context of *Dictatorial paranoia* and the brutal jihadist group in Cabo Delago province. Faith-related activities such as sharing online images, blogging about faith, or chatting about faith issues with others, can land Christians in very serious trouble.

**Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (2.50 points)**

There have been brutal killings and there is a high risk involved in Christians meeting up. In the areas controlled by jihadists, it is unsafe for all Christians to do this, but is extremely unsafe for converts.

### Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

**Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)**

Celebrating a Christian wedding requires some minimum security and safety, which is currently lacking in certain areas of Mozambique. For Christians in the northern part of the country, cele-

brating a Christian wedding could provoke an attack from Islamist groups.

**Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (3.25 points)**

In the northern part of the country, baptism celebrations are not safe. In the other parts of the country it can be particularly difficult for converts. Culturally, in many African countries, baptism is a major event and hence many friends and families participate in the celebrations. In the context of *Christian denominational protectionism* and *Islamic oppression*, this can be problematic for Christians. This is the case both in Muslim-dominated areas (affecting all Christian groups) and for non-Catholics in other areas. Any baptism has to be carried out without drawing outsiders' attention.

**Block 2.9: Children of Christians have been harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' faith. (3.25 points)**

Persecution is not limited to adults. In the context of the ongoing jihadist attacks in the country, parents and their children are victims of harassment and discrimination in the community and schools in the northern part of the country. Furthermore, in some areas where the Catholics are dominant, children of Evangelicals face similar challenges.

**Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (2.50 points)**

This happens in Cabo Delgado province and also in situations where new churches are the minority. For Christian parents, raising their children in Christian faith is dangerous where jihadist groups have become influential in society, particularly in areas where government forces have been forced to withdraw.

## Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

**Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (3.75 points)**

This affects all Christians in the context of *Organized corruption and crime*, *Islamic oppression* and *Dictatorial paranoia*. Communal participation is becoming limited in the northern part of the country where religious tension is high. Where jihadists and their cells have influence, it has created an environment of fear among Christians who keep a low profile as a result. In other areas of Mozambique, where the Roman Catholic Church is dominant, Christians from other denominations often find they are discriminated against.

**Block 3.3: Christians have been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage. (3.50 points)**

This issue affects Christians in the context of jihadist groups and, to a lesser extent, organized crime cartels. Abduction is one of the characteristics of jihadist movements in Africa. They abduct and force young men into their fighting units and young girls into sexual slavery. Christian women and girls are under threat of abduction by Islamist insurgents during village raids in the north of Mozambique.

**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.). (3.25 points)**

This is partly related to monitoring and hindering participation in communal institutions. Sources in the country report that Christians in Cabo Delgado province have faced harassment for not meeting Islamic requirements as perceived by the Islamist insurgents. Violence by the Islamist insurgents has taken on a new face with Christians at times being singled out and forced to renounce their faith. Such acts have forced many people to flee from their homes in various villages in the province of Cabo Delgado. In addition, those who speak against injustice and drug dealers face harassment and hostility.

**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.). (3.25 points)**

This particularly affects Christians in areas where jihadists operate or are present through their network of cells and also where cartels are present. This is mostly in the northern part of the country. Those who participate in organized crime monitor Christians who speak against the use of drugs and participation in the drug networks. Government cadres also target churches for surveillance where the leaders are known to speak out against injustice and government maladministration.

## Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

**Block 4.9: Christian civil society organizations or political parties have been hindered in their functioning or forbidden because of their Christian convictions. (3.50 points)**

In the country in general, there are hindrances for those Christians who want speak publicly about justice, human rights and democracy. There has not been a general tendency of hindering political parties in their functioning because of Christian convictions. However, where religious leaders or prominent Christians have been vocal against the government they face obstruction. Civil society organizations can only work in areas where the government allows them to operate, and they often face close scrutiny. This is also a reflection of the country's struggle to attain a functioning and full-fledged democracy.

**Block 4.4: Christians have been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons. (3.25 points)**

Travelling for Christians in some parts of the country - especially in the northern part - has become extremely dangerous due to the presence of jihadist groups and the threat of abduction. Christians and Christian organizations are particularly vulnerable, as jihadists are known to target them frequently. This remained the case in WWL 2023, despite the fact that military operations by government forces succeeded in pushing the jihadists out of some areas.

**Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.00 points)**

This persecution comes from three major sources: From the government (*Dictatorial paranoia*); from jihadist groups (*Islamic oppression*); and from drug cartels (*Organized corruption and crime*).

Country experts have emphasized that the Church played a significant role in the democratization process in the post-colonial era and continues to play a key role in brokering peace deals in the country where needed. However, it is evident that the current government does not welcome the interference of the Church when it comes to voicing out concerns over human rights violations. The government is also using the country's dire security situation to silence freedom of expression and opinion, especially where Christians advocate for more freedom, justice, equality and greater democracy. For example, in 2021 Bishop Luis Fernando Lisboa (bishop of Pemba in Cabo Delgado province) was transferred to Brazil because he [criticized the government](#) and its response to the jihadist war (CNA, 12 February 2021).

**Block 4.12: Christians, churches or Christian organizations have been hindered in publicly displaying religious symbols. (3.00 points)**

This issue should be seen within the context of jihadist activity in the country. Churches and church symbols have been vandalized and destroyed. This is becoming a challenge for many Christians in the northern part of the country.

## Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

**Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.50 points)**

This persecution issue has many sources and hence emanates from all engines but with different intensity. In general, there are two main aspects: First, Christian preaching is often monitored by the authorities for signs of any criticism of the government; secondly, jihadists monitor all church activity in the northern part of the country. In some circumstances, churches are left without security so that they cannot operate at all; at other times, churches are labeled as being 'anti government' and state agents will be present in the congregation as a result.

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

In the past four years, jihadist groups have coordinated attacks against churches and other infrastructure, making it too risky for Christians to meet in their churches. This is not only limited to the areas where the jihadists are particularly active and goes beyond Cabo Delgado province. In the other parts of the country, the authorities apply pressure through sending infiltrators into churches suspected of holding negative views about the government. This is despite the fact that "the constitution protects places of worship and the right of religious groups to organize, worship, and pursue their religious objectives freely."

**Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (3.25 points)**

Church registration has become challenging, especially for the newer and smaller non-traditional church communities. The draft law covering registration, which was proposed in 2019 and 2020, has not yet been finalized in the WWL 2023 reporting period. What is known is that the national government and the Holy See signed an Accord that governs the Catholic Church's rights and responsibilities in the country. This preferential treatment puts the other churches at a disadvantage.

**Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.25 points)**

In areas dominated by jihadist groups, it is completely out of the question as it would likely provoke attack. In the other parts of the country, most outside gatherings require both government permission and security and the authorities make it difficult, if not impossible, to get permission.

## 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.

Mozambique: Violence Block question		WWL 2023	WWL 2022
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	100 *	100 *
6.2	How many churches or public Christian properties (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?	0	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)?	100 *	10 *
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	75 *	100
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	100 *	10
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	1000 *	1000 *
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?	100 *	1000

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?	100	100 *
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	1000 *	1000 *
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	10	100 *

## 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

Mozambique: WWL 2019 - WWL 2023	
Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2023	10.5
2022	9.9
2021	9.4
2020	6.4
2019	6.0

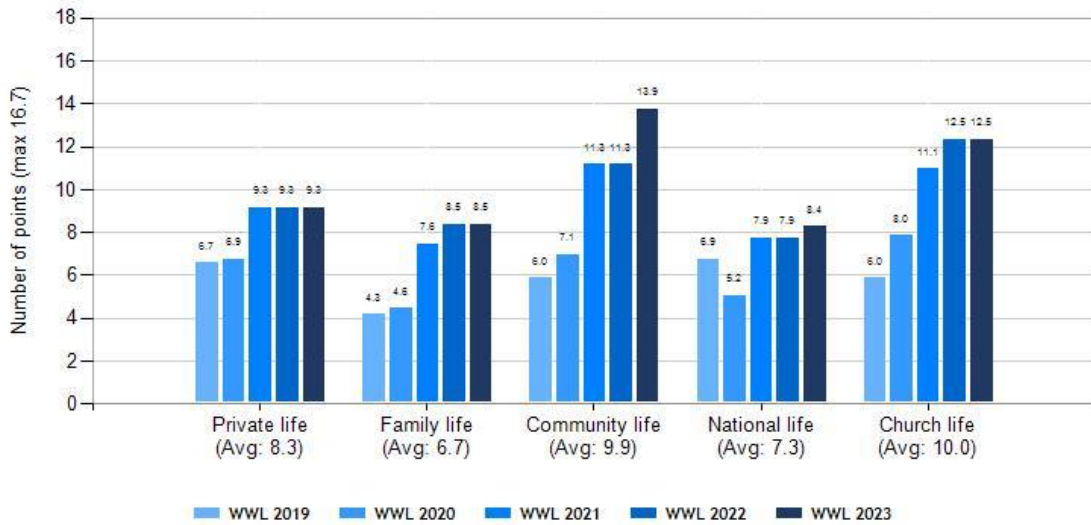
The average pressure has been steadily climbing over the past five reporting periods which shows that the situation for Christians in Mozambique is getting more challenging, with the intensity as well as frequency of persecution increasing.

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

As shown in the chart below, the average pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* (10.0 points) followed by the *Community sphere* (9.9 points). This is characteristic of persecution driven by jihadists. Churches are being targeted and Christians struggle to hold services and events inside and outside their church premises. The *Family* and *private* have the lowest scores for average pressure.

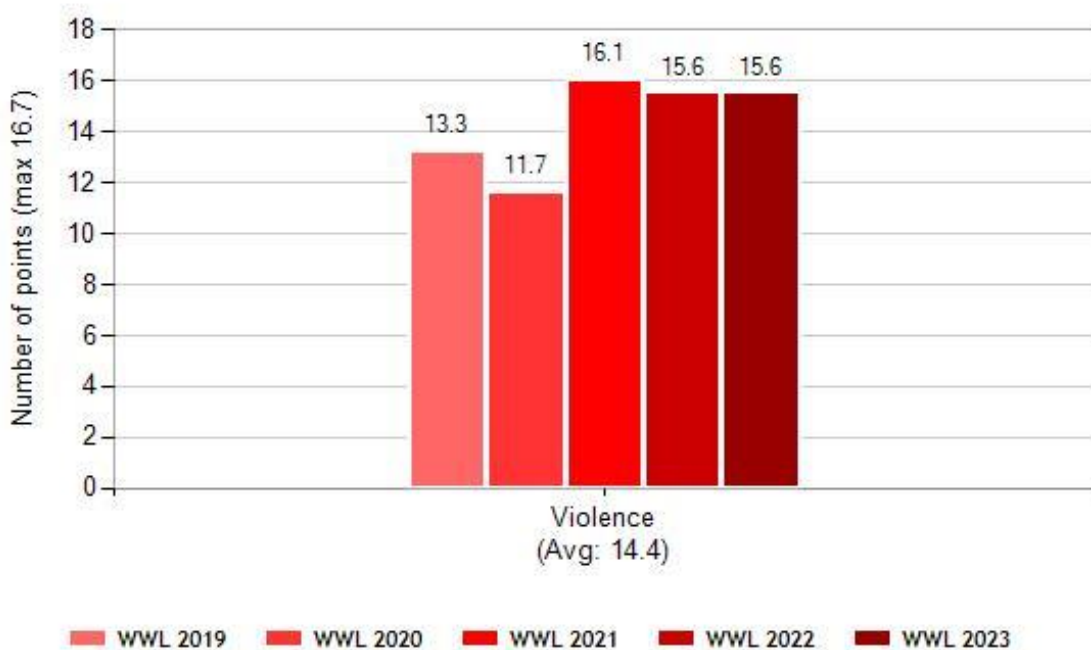


WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for Mozambique (Spheres of life)



### 5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for Mozambique (Violence)



The chart above shows that violence is at an extreme level, and may now be levelling off at the 15.6 point mark. Only in the WWL 2020 reporting period did the violence against Christians score below 12.0 points. The five year average of 14.4 points shows how the past years have been extremely violent in Mozambique, particularly in Cabo Delgado province.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions
Political and Legal	Denied custody of children; Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Forced to flee town/country; Trafficking; Violence – death; Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Enforced religious dress code
Technological	-

The most common violations affecting Christian women and girls in the country are sexual harassment and rape – attributed to the incursion of Islamic militants – and forced marriage to militants, according to local sources. A country expert explains: “Young Christian women are forced to get married with insurgents' leaders and other women are forced to work as slaves.” Mozambique also has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with [53% of girls](#) being married before they reach 18, often fueled by low education and employment opportunities for women and girls (Girls Not Brides, 2022). Cultural pressure to conform to community norms is so high that some Christian girls have reported being forced by their parents into unions with Muslims, primarily, for the prestige of having a married daughter “even when it was known that this would have implications on their faith.” Victims of forced marriage and rape have been psychologically and emotionally traumatized by these events.

Abduction is also commonly used as a tool for violating rights of freedom. During the WWL 2023 reporting period there have been numerous reports of abductions across areas of the country where jihadists and their cells exert influence. One expert noted: “Christian girls were taken as war trophies.” In addition to marriage, girls are also used for forced labor. The practice of viewing women as domestic slaves and tools of sexuality has fueled the abduction of women by insurgents to use for sex as well as domestic chores. This has especially been exacerbated by the rise in violence in the north of the country and is one of the main drivers of [human](#) trafficking in Mozambique (USDS, Trafficking in Persons Report: Mozambique, 2022). “Over 800 women are said to have been sent to jihadist camps for forced labor or sex”, a country expert disclosed.

In Muslim-dominated eastern regions of the country, Christian women and girls are required to comply with the Islamic dress code in all Muslim schools and in communal areas. Converts from a Muslim or African Traditional Religion background are particularly vulnerable to persecution from within the family sphere. Many Muslim families living in Mozambique force suspected female converts to marry a Muslim man to ensure that they cannot get involved in Christian activities. Objection to these marriages can prove fatal for young women especially. If already married, converts face the threat of divorce and the loss of custody of their children. They may also be denied their due inheritance.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	Denied access to Christian religious materials, teachings and rites; Travel bans/restrictions on movement
Security	Abduction; Forced out of home – expulsion; Military/militia conscription/service against conscience; Violence – death
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological
Technological	-

According to country experts, *Islamic oppression* is the most common engine of persecution, particularly in the north of the country. It is reported that Christian men and boys have been particularly targeted by Islamist insurgents and killed or chased out of their homes. Young boys are particularly vulnerable to abduction and forcibly recruited into militias. This practice has been [confirmed by multiple reports](#) by Human Rights Watch (HRW, 24 November 2022). A country expert commented: “Young men are recruited to join the insurgents, older men are killed because they are regarded as weak and cannot join the insurgents' army.”

Church leaders who have been critical of the government and denounced the instigators of persecution have been harassed by government officials. Pastors have also reported being denied exit visas and being incarcerated for up to three years in re-education camps. “In 2021, 5 pastors from Cabo Delgado were detained in Mocuba”, a source revealed.

## Persecution of other religious minorities

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2021):

- “Although ISIS-M fighters said they targeted Christians and Christian villages, reporters and local aid workers stated that in practice they made little distinction among their victims. Media reports also indicated that ISIS-M targeted both Muslim and Christian communities. They occupied entire communities and burned religious and government structures”.

Other religious minorities (such as Hindus, Buddhists and Jews) are very few in number in the country and most are expatriates. There is no specific form of persecution affecting these groups. However, as stated in [IRFR 2020](#):

- “Religious leaders continued to express concern that a draft law on religious practices, proposed in 2019 that was still pending in parliament at year’s end, could prevent religious groups that have fewer than 500 followers from registering with the Ministry of Justice. Leaders of small religious communities expressed concern that the registration requirement would prevent them from registering their organizations. According to a religious leader, the draft law would also require followers to have their

identities attested by a notary, which would create an administrative barrier to religious practice." This draft law is still under consideration.

A significant number of the population still follow traditional African religions. Most adherents live in remote parts of the country and there are no reports of persecution. Many are converting to Christianity.

## Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

### Islamic oppression

ASWJ is one of the newest jihadist groups in Africa. Emerging in 2017, it has made international headlines by beheading Christians and attacking government security forces and installations. The government's counter-insurgency measures are described as heavy-handed, which is actually helping boost jihadist recruitment. Regional block SADC and Rwanda sent troops to help, but if the government cannot introduce a more comprehensive strategy, it is likely that this Persecution engine will become stronger and the jihadist threat could expand to neighboring countries. Also, if the government only intends to focus on a purely military solution, it might prove ineffective in the long-run.

### Clan oppression

This Persecution engine is likely to continue in the short-term. However, there could be change in the long-term. Through the influence of education, political inclusion and more democracy, ethnic groups are likely to become more open to outside ideas and more tolerant of Christians in their areas.

### Dictatorial paranoia

Mozambique has seen so many conflicts and humanitarian crises since its independence. So any attempt by the ruling party to become more authoritarian can only invite another conflict. Nevertheless, if democracy can become established, then this Persecution engine will fade away (its place probably then being taken over by *Secular intolerance*). So far no major steps have been made in this respect except for the holding of periodic elections (the latest one in 2019). A worrying factor in the background is that the ruling and the opposition parties were once at war with each other (in the period 1977 to 1992). However, if the government and the opposition work together to build sustainable democracy and good governance, this engine will wither away.

### Organized corruption and crime

The government is currently having little success in tackling the problem of organized crime. With the lack of good governance and the existence of drug cartels and increasing Islamic militant involvement, this Persecution engine looks set to become stronger in the future.

## External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines description: centers - <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/mozambique#/>
- Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.00 points): criticized the government - <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/246472/catholic-bishop-in-mozambique-hotspot-transferred-to-brazilian-diocese>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: 53% of girls - <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/mozambique/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: human trafficking - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/mozambique/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: confirmed by multiple reports - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/24/five-years-justice-still-dream-cabo-delgado-victims>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: IRFR 2020 - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/mozambique/>

## Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on the new Research & Reports page of the website od.org. As in earlier years, they are also available on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) using the following links:

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Mozambique>