2022 IDP & Refugee-specific Religious Persecution (SRP) Methodology

Contents

1. Sources

For the 2022 IDP & Refugee-specific Religious Persecution report, the SRP Unit of Open Doors International's World Watch Research (WWR) gathered and analyzed data using a mixed methods approach, comprised of both qualitative and quantitative elements.

During the reporting period (1 October 2020 – 30 September 2021), WWR monitored religious persecution dynamics in over 100 countries.[1] SRP analysts studied data from the 76 countries where persecution is high, very high or extreme. However, some findings additionally draw from previous years of data, specifically 2019-2021, primarily to identify the main countries where Christian IDPs and refugees are particularly evident.

The WWR data analyzed by the SRP Unit comes from in-country networks, Open Doors country researchers, external experts and WWR persecution analysts. As part of the data collection process, regionally based experts collected qualitative data from trauma specialists, church leaders, focus groups and experts. Additionally, the report offers information based on interviews with Christian men and women who have experienced violence due to their faith.

SRP analysts carried out extensive desk research to sort through key literature within the field of forced migration studies and the relationship with religious identity, drawing from publications by academics, the media, UN, governmental institutions and NGOs.

Additional IDP and refugee-specific interviews were also carried out with regional researchers, external organizations and WWR analysts to gather qualitative data and explore different experiences across the regions studied. In total, 19 interviews were carried out and contributions were made by

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[1] Complete WWL Methodology, Open Doors International, November 2021, available at
https://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Complete-WWL-Methodology-November-2021.pdf
[password: freedom]

33 regional experts, including representatives from four external organizations and multiple departments within Open Doors International. The interviews followed a framework of set questions prepared in advance to address the primary research topic and adapted to suit the relevant region or country of the interviewee/s. (See Section 5 below: Exemplar interview questions).

2. Method

The WWR questionnaire responses were coded through a dual categorization framework.

The responses were first coded through an adapted version of the SRP Pressure Points framework (see Section 4e below: Definitions of Pressure Points) to reflect the refugee and IDP lens of persecution. The analysis of Pressure Points enables an understanding of overall trends emerging from the experiences of persecuted Christians while retaining contextual descriptions. Three new Pressure Points were added to the SRP framework: 'Discrimination/harassment within the asylum system', 'Forced family separation' and 'Refoulement (forced return)'.

'Pressure Point' is the term used to refer to both the pressure and violence faced in the course of religious persecution. In standard WWL methodology, 'pressure' denotes non-violent persecution experienced in all areas of a Christian's life and 'violence' is defined as "the deprivation of physical freedom or as serious bodily or mental harm to Christians or serious damage to their property" (and related incidents), which can potentially occur in all areas of life.[2] In contrast, these are combined in this 'SRP methodology' and indicate areas of particular sensitivity for Christian IDPs and refugees. Researchers borrowed the term from the martial arts context, where a Pressure Point is a "point that, when pressure is applied, produces crippling pain". They are "used to exploit a weakness or vulnerability in the human body to gain an advantage over an opponent".[3] IDP & refugee SRP Pressure Point categories provide a means to establish the presence of particular forms of pressure and violence associated with being forcibly displaced.

The filtered questionnaire responses recorded under the Pressure Point 'Forced to flee' were secondarily coded through the WWR drivers of persecution categorization.[4] These results formed the chapter in the IDP/Refugee report entitled "Drivers of Displacement".

Desk research and the interview process verified and consolidated these research findings. The interviews were used in particular for qualitative descriptions of religious persecution dynamics specific to local, national and regional contexts.

3. Limitations

Some limitations were experienced throughout the course of research and study, including inconsistent levels of information across countries. Solely using the Pressure Point methodology with inconsistent levels of information provided a data set with results primarily useful on the country and regional level, rather than the global, so the information gathered through interviews helped to consolidate gaps in knowledge and corroborate Pressure Point data. To address this, in future research

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[2] Complete WWL Methodology, pp.20-29
[3] Gahan, J: Martial Arts Pressure Points: Medium Range, July 2017, available at
   https://www.scribd.com/book/355164891/Martial-Arts-Pressure-Points-Medium-Range
[4] Complete WWL Methodology, pp.18-19

there can be a greater inclusion of refugee and IDP experiences through adapting questions and research methods.

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 Open Doors field networks, research analysts, external experts and an increased use of technological options, Open Doors is confident that the WWL 2022 scoring, analysis and documentation did maintain required levels of quality and reliability, as in the previous reporting period.

By nature, qualitative research is limited, and respondents' open-ended feedback allows for subjectivity that can limit the quality of the response and ease with which it can be analyzed.

Further, there are limitations on the collection of sensitive information. For example, from stigma and feelings of shame surrounding issues such as gender-based violence. For many Christian men and women, reporting sexual violence is unspeakably difficult or dangerous. There can also be challenges in the often precarious situation of IDPs and refugees. While one of the interviewees had directly experienced forced displacement themselves, a greater focus on interviewing refugees and IDPs may provide more detailed primary data and include multiple direct voices of those who have experienced displacement. However, this must be balanced with considerations of security and research ethics. Not only is speaking out often too risky due to security concerns, but interviews can also present dangers to their mental health, re-traumatizing interviewees.

4. Definitions

a. Persecution

There is no international, legal definition of persecution. Situations can be defined as persecution, where persons experience the denial of the rights listed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. WWL methodology has opted for a theological rather than a sociological definition:

> "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."[5]

b. IDP

An Internally Displaced Person. WWR used the widely accepted definition of an IDP as defined by the "United Nations' Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement":

> "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of

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[5] Complete WWL Methodology, p.7

armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."[6]

c. Refugee

WWR used the widely accepted definition of a refugee as defined by international law, in particular the "1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees":

Persons outside of their country of origin who are "unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."[7]

d. Migrant

While the research primarily focuses on the experiences of IDPs and refugees, some additional analysis is also focused on the experiences of migrants. At the international level, there is no universally accepted definition of the term 'migrant', and as noted by UNHCR, interchanging the terms refugee and migrant can lead to a poor understanding of the challenges and protection needs of different groups.[8] Factors leading people to move are multi-faceted and complex.

Bearing that in mind, WWR has used the definition from the International Organization for Migration:

"An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students."[9]

e. Pressure Points

The following table provides definitions and clarifying details for the thirty-two Pressure Points (two with sub-categories) that are identified and analyzed in Open Doors' IDP and Refugee-specific Religious Persecution report.

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[6] Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 1998, p.5, available at
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/guiding_principles_on_internal_displacement.pdf

[7] Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951, p.3, available at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/guiding_principles_on_internal_displacement.pdf

[8] Refugees and Migrants – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), UNHCR UK, March 2016, available at
https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/3/56e95c676/refugees-migrants-frequently-asked-questions-faqs.html [last accessed 16 May 2022]

[9] Glossary on Migration, International Organization for Migration, 2019, p.132, available at
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf

Pressure Point	Definition
1. Abduction	The act of making a person go somewhere with you, especially using threats of violence.[10]
2. Denied access to Christian religious materials.	The denial of access to Christian religious material, such as Bibles, study notes and Christian symbols.
3. Denied access to social community/networks	The denial of access to social community or networks.
4. Denied communal resources	The intentional act of denying or removing access to communal resources, such as communal organizations, buildings or other public goods, services or programs.
5. Denied custody of children	The act of denying a person of the legal and/or physical custody of their child/children, or the right to have a relationship or direct contact with their child/children.
6. Denied food or water	The act of deliberately denying another person of food of water.
7. Denied inheritance or possessions	Denying a person of their inheritance rights or their possessions.
8. Denied legal ability to marry Christian spouse	The act of denying a person the legal right to marry a Christian spouse.
9. Denied/restricted healthcare	Discrimination affecting users of health care services. It serves as a barrier to accessing health services, affects the quality of health services provided, and reinforces exclusion from society for both individuals and groups.[11]
10. Discrimination/harassment via education	Distinguishing, excluding or limiting access to education. Specifically, by: (a) depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level;

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[10] Abduction, Cambridge Dictionary, available at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/abduction [last accessed 10 June 2022]

[11] Adapted from the Joint United Nations statement on ending discrimination in health care settings, June 2017, available at https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/27-06-2017-joint-united-nations-statement-on-ending-discrimination-in-health-care-settings [last accessed 16 May 2022]

	(b) limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard; (c) establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or (d) by inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with human dignity.[12]
11. Discrimination/harassment within the asylum system	Discriminating against the asylum seeker by affecting their asylum status, and/or using the system to harass the asylum seeker.
12. Economic harassment via business/job/work access	Targeting or boycotting a business to its economic disadvantage, or distinguishing, excluding or limiting a person's access to work or jobs due to their Christian faith. Specifically, by: (a) preventing Christians from obtaining or retaining gainful employment; (b) limiting any person or group of persons to working conditions of an inferior standard; (c) by inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with human dignity; or (d) forced labor, including subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities, but not extending to slavery (which is covered by Pressure Point no. 26).[13]
13. Economic harassment via fines	The act of disadvantaging another person through inappropriately applied fines.
14. Enforced religious dress code	The act of forcing, or applying significant pressure on someone, to wear religious clothing.
15. False charges	Legal charges against a person that are unproven and untrue, made in the spirit of deliberateness or deceit.
16. Forced divorce	The act of terminating a marriage or marital union without the consent of the spouse.

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[12] Adapted from Article 1 of the Convention against Discrimination in Education, UNESCO, 1960, available at https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/convention-against-discrimination-education [last accessed 10 June 2022]

[13] Adapted from the International Labor Organization, available at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/news/WCMS_237569/lang--en/index.html [last accessed 16 May 2022]

17. Forced family separation	The act of forcing family members to be separated, for example by manipulating the use of resettlement schemes.
18. Forced marriage	A marriage in which one party has not personally expressed their full, free and informed consent to the union. (Adapted from OCHCR).[14]
19. Forced out of home – expulsion	The act of suddenly and forcibly expelling a person from the residence they have been living in, or applying such pressure that they feel they have no freedom to stay.
20. Forced to flee town/country	The act of suddenly and forcibly expelling a person from the town/country they have been living in, or applying such pressure that they feel that they have no choice to stay.
21. Incarceration by family (house arrest)	The obligation upon an individual that she/he be forbidden to leave his or her place of residence except for limited, specified circumstances.[15]
22. Imprisonment by government	The act of being imprisoned in a prison, or place used as a prison, by a government body or agent.[16]
23. Military/militia conscription/service against conscience	Serving in the military forces of a country against a person's conscience, being ill-treated (denied Freedom of Religious Belief) in the service of the military, or being forced to carry out specific acts in military service that are against a person's conscience.
24. Refoulement (forced return)	The practice of not forcing refugees or asylum seekers to return to a country in which they are liable to be subjected to persecution.
25. Targeted seduction	The act of seducing someone (here with a sexual connotation) with the intent purpose of leading them away from their Christian faith.

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[14] Child, early and forced marriage, including in humanitarian settings, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, available at https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/ChildMarriage.aspx [last accessed 27 November 2019]

[15] Adapted from Duhaime's Legal Dictionary, available at http://www.duhaime.org/LegalDictionary/H/HouseArrest.aspx [last accessed 27 November 2019]

[16] Adapted from the Cambridge Dictionary, available at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/imprisonment [last accessed 10 June 2022]

26. Trafficking a) Sexual exploitation not explicitly mentioned b) Sexual exploitation explicitly mentioned.	Trafficking: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploiting a person.[17]
27. Travel bans/restrictions on movement	Preventing a person from travelling somewhere, or restricting their movement against their will.
28. Violence – death	The cause of loss of life.
29. Violence – physical (including torture)	Bodily harm inflicted by one person on another person.[18]
30. Violence – psychological	Any intentional conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats.[19]
31. Violence – sexual a) Rape not explicitly mentioned b) Rape explicitly mentioned	Any sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationships to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.[20]
32. Violence – Verbal (including harassment and insults)	Harsh and insulting language directed at a person.[21]

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[17] Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons [last accessed 10 June 2022]

[18] Adapted from the Law Dictionary, available at https://thelawdictionary.org/physical-violence/ [last accessed 27 November 2019]

[19] European Institute for Gender Equality, available at https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1334 [last accessed 27 November 2019]

[20] Adapted from the World Health Organization, available at https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap6.pdf last accessed 27 November 2019]

[21] Adapted from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, available at https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/verbal%20abuse [last accessed 10 June 2022]

5. Exemplar interview questions

Below is a list of exemplar interview questions, which were used as a framework for the interviews, and adapted for the regional/country focus of the interviewee/s.

1. These are the countries we've identified as significant within your region: *(Insert country list)* Would you add or take away any countries?
2. Within your region, where are the most significant refugee, IDP, and migrant populations? How do the challenges facing these groups differ?
3. What drivers of displacement do you see in your region?
4. What do see as the key challenges facing Christians who are IDPs or refugees? How do these challenges specifically target or affect Christian IDP/refugee populations in comparison with other IDPs/refugees?
5. What do you think are the key dynamics/issues within your region/particular countries that we shouldn't miss?
6. What additional challenges are there in the context of displacement for groups that are especially vulnerable, such as OBBs (Other Background Believers), women and children?
7. Do you see a specific impact on those left behind by Christians fleeing? If yes, could you describe this in more detail.
8. To what extent do Christians want to and are they able to return to their homes?
9. Is there anything we haven't asked you about that you think is of relevance?

WWR's commitment is to a robust SRP methodology that can stand up to academic scrutiny. The team of analysts is always looking to make improvements and welcomes any serious suggestions which can be sent in by email to research@od.org.