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PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

Degree in International Relations

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Abstract

The persecution for Christians

The total population of Christians has been historically the largest in the World, however during this last period from 2010-2021 the situation has changed. Influenced by some demographic, democratic, social, and religious factors, there has been a growth in the number of Christians being persecuted. It is surprising that it has not been declared as a genocide, since the number of deaths is going up every year. Although the majority of States have signed and they defend the Humans Rights and Liberties, in the real basis this only remains in the paper. Therefore, to providing visibility to this awful and hidden reality, this project aims to study the factors that have led to this situation and what are the consequences to the persecuted Christians.

First of all, this analytic document reveals the evolution of the general situation in the World regarding religions, and population by region. Secondly, it shows some links between the region and its characteristics with the evolution of the religions. After that it aims to analyze the list of the 50 countries where there is more persecution for Christians. Following a comparison of data with other sources and reports it will make some hypothesis: the countries with a Muslim majority population and with more restricted governments have less freedom of religion and therefore, more persecution for Christians.

Later, it will provide some data on the impact that this situation could have on the lives of millions of people that live under persecution. For instance, some of the greater impacts are in mortality, civil liberties and well-being conditions. Although this analysis is mostly generic, it will make some distinctions on the subgroups of Christianity, giving to the differences in conditions. This study on the impacts will lead to the future projections of the situation. In other words, how this situation might evolve in the future years. And which relation could be in the number of Christians around the World and the conditions that might affect them, mainly persecution.

Finally as conclusions, it will recap the greatest findings of all the analysis and some of recommendations or suggestions that could change the situation. In a different direction, from a social and humanitarian view, it will make clear the risk factors of this sector of population of the world and the remedies that should be. After all this situation has been since the beginning and it will continue since it has been promised: *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (Matthew 5:10-11).*

Key words: Persecution, Christians, population, impacts

I. Introduction

The number of Christians being persecuted are increasing every day, the living conditions of millions of families around the world are worsening. Their lives, security, health and future are threatened, and no one pays attention. This is why this issue is shocking and urgent to tackle (Open Doors International, 2021).

Although, in theory every human should enjoy their rights of dignity, security, freedom of religion (Articles 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), in reality this is not happening. Even worse, all the consequences that carry the near abandonment of these people are silenced. Furthermore, owing to the lack of visibility of the situation, this work is addressed to provide the information to the world of the measured demographic consequences of this problem.

Thus, firstly as Christian and second as a student I want to study the consequences: in the population, spatial distribution, mortality and migration of this sector. For this reason, the initial research question is: Which demographic consequences are happening to persecuted Christians? (The Voice of the Martyrs, 2021). How can we expect the future of these people to be? And finally, which could be the mechanisms or reforms that should be taken for addressing this problem (Samaritan's Purse, 2021).

It is important to highlight the different limitations of this research, mainly the difficulties to find the accurate database, since every organization used similar but not the same statistics, and also the fact that each organization uses a different classification. Thus, this project has maintained a common-but-not-the-same criteria. Moreover, some other organizations such as the World Religion Database were not able to provide access to its database. Therefore, this has represented a limitation in the depth of the research, as well as the limitation of space and time.

Objectives

First, one of the objectives is to make known the conditions and sufferings that millions of people are going through, more precisely Christians. Secondly, it is to measure and analyze the demographic trends of this sector, through the analysis of data and elaboration of tables and graphs. Thirdly and subsequently, this work will provide a generic perspective of the conditions and future prospects of this sector of the world population.

II. Data and Methodology

This work is going to follow a quantitative design, focused on the trends, indexes, and available database of the conditions and consequences of persecuted Christians. For this reason, this work would be based on the data from different organizations and the theory specialized acquired in the course. The main resources used in this project are from The United Nations Database from years 2010-2022, the Open Doors organization data from 2010-2022, and also reports and data from the Pew Research Center.

Regarding the literature, the majority of the authors used are from Pew Research Center, the UN, Open Doors, Samaritan Purse and The Voice of the Martyrs. However, many of the documents read are from newspapers and recent articles from the ground of the real situations that are living persecuted Christians around the world. It is key to mention that this topic has remained pretty much hidden, there is little documentation in regard to the effects of persecution in the lives of the Christian world population. Some of the literature available is based in the sources used in this paper, such as Open Doors, that uses both reports and also personal information from the ground. Moreover, the significance of this research is precisely this, to give visibility and to suggest this topic for further study.

Addressing the methodology of this paper, it consists of three stages in which the analysis is developed. In the first stage it will be developed a general evaluation of the data and information in the ground. More precisely it will be centered in the demographic data, first in general, bearing in mind the distribution of religions in the world during the years. After that, it will be explained the democratic indexes that influence in the States and therefore, affect to the religion persecution, especially to the Christians. For the first stage it will be considered the information from the World Watch List provided by Open Doors, and subsequently the evaluation of the 50 countries where there is more persecution during the years 2010-2021. Following by an analysis of the indexes of democracy of the States (Freedom of religion, Freedom of expression and civil liberties) on the 50 countries where there is more persecution. Other information will be taken into account, for instance, reports on Religions and restrictions by The Pew Research Center, as well as searching for more data and reports from the V-Dem and the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA). Although it is a generic view on religions, it will be focused on *Christian* persecuted people.

The second stage consists in measuring and analyzing the impact on the situation and variables through an elaboration of tables and graphs that will show better the relation between them. Thus, after having searched and read the literature on the field, it will be developed the elaboration of the analysis on the variables selected: demographic, more focused on the regions (Middle East-North Africa, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America), difference by gender, the countries' well-being conditions and religious subgroups and minorities, and democratic, based on the variables of the democratic freedoms, such as freedom of religion and freedom of expression. It will analyze the correlation of the variables, and there will be elaborated tables and graphs regarding this analysis.

The third stage will be centered in the analysis of the risk factors that derived from the previous stages and data, and later, it will be addressed a future prospect of the situation. After the analysis of the data, it summarizes the main findings of the research as well as the main issues that derived from it, and finally it will conclude with the future expectations of the situation based on the data projection and the risk factors.

IV. The general evaluation

For analyzing the situation of the state of religions, and more specifically the Christianity, it is important to make an evaluation of the general situation in regard to the demographic and the democratic conditions.

a. Demographic analysis

Based on the UN database (Data UN, n.d.), Pew Research Center, and Open Doors, this paper analyzes the distinct classification of religions from the year 2010-2022, with the objective of seeing the progress of each group.

Some clarifications are needed, for granting a common ground it has been useful to continue with the Religion classification by Pew Research Center (Pew Research, 2015). However, it is known that the statistics could be more divided, and it is certain that for categorizing the distinct religious groups this classification might be a little problematic. Nevertheless, this project comprises the following groups:

- **Christians:** Catholics, Protestants, nondenominational churches, Orthodox Communion, Saints of Last Days (SLD), Jehovah Witnesses (JW).
- **Muslims:** the two branches of Islam – Sunni and Shia.
- **Unaffiliated:**
- **Hindus:** the major traditions of Hinduism
- **Buddhists:** the three major branches of Buddhism, Mahayana, Theravada and Vajrayana
- **Adherents of Folks Religions:** this entails different creeds or local beliefs, or even traditional religions, in many statistics could be identified as ‘other’
- **Jews:** based on a self-identity as Jewish, not taking into account the Jewish ancestry.

Looking the progress of the Religion groups worldwide from 2010, 2015 and 2021, we can see a stable evolution in which the Christians represent the major religious group (31.4% - 2010, 31.2% - 2015, 31.1% - 2021), followed by the Muslims (23.2% - 2010, 24.1% - 2015, 24.9% - 2021). While the general projection of the Christians is going down, the Muslims seem to go up. This could be caused by several motives that later will be developed.

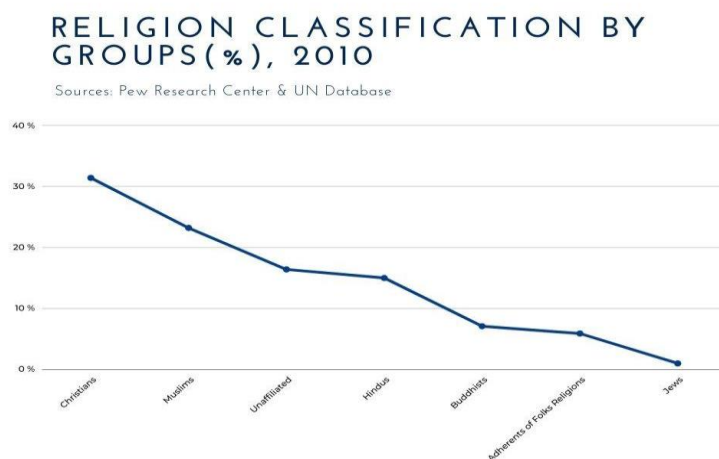


Figure 1. Religion classification by groups 2010

RELIGION CLASSIFICATION BY GROUPS(%), 2015

Sources: Pew Research Center & UN Database

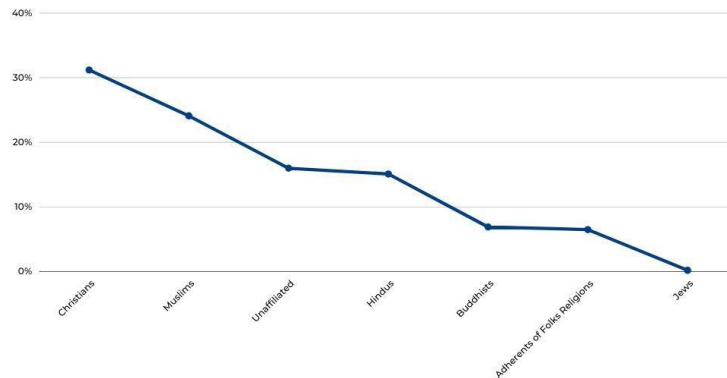


Figure 2. Religion classification by groups 2015

RELIGION CLASSIFICATION BY GROUPS(%), 2021

Sources: Pew Research Center & UN Database

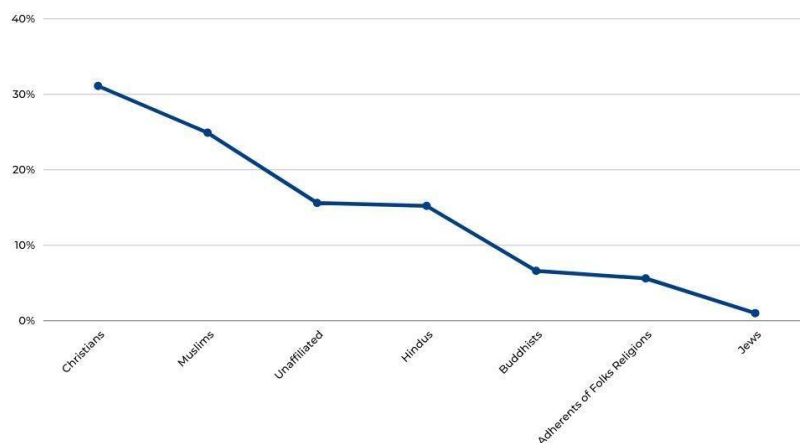


Figure 3. Religion classification by groups 2021

Although, in absolute terms Christians represent the larger group of religions, in the real basis there is a hidden reality in which there is an increasing persecution of Christians around the world. As the recent reports suggest there are different reasons for the variation in religions, many are related to demographic conditions, social and political. But the one non-spoken topic is persecution. As it had been said, in general terms Christians remain the larger religious group, but as we see in the progression of the religions, it is going downwards. For clarifying this issue, now we are going to focus on the sector analyzed in this paper analyzing another source of information, that is Open Doors.

Open Doors is an organization that each year publishes a ranking of the 50 countries where Christians are more persecuted. Based on that list from the years 2010-2022 it is found that North Korea has been almost consecutively the number 1 country where Christians are more persecuted. The second country where there is harder persecution for Christians is Afghanistan, in fact, this year Afghanistan ranks the first place. This is related to the formation of the population, according to the Pew Research Center, around two-thirds of the Muslims in the world are concentrated in the countries with a bigger Muslim population (2015). While Christians are more dispersed, and only around a 48% of Christians live in the 10 largest Christian population (Diamant, 2019).

2015	2015 MUSLIM POPULATION	% OF COUNTRY THAT IS MUSLIM	% OF WORLD'S MUSLIM POPULATION IN 2015	2060	2060 MUSLIM POPULATION	% OF COUNTRY PROJECTED TO BE MUSLIM	% OF WORLD'S MUSLIM POPULATION IN 2060
1 Indonesia	219,960,000	87.1%	12.6%	1 India	333,090,000	19.4%	11.1%
2 India	194,810,000	14.9	11.1	2 Pakistan	283,650,000	96.5	9.5
3 Pakistan	184,000,000	96.4	10.5	3 Nigeria	283,160,000	60.5	9.5
4 Bangladesh	144,020,000	90.6	8.2	4 Indonesia	253,450,000	86.1	8.5
5 Nigeria	90,020,000	50.0	5.1	5 Bangladesh	181,800,000	91.9	6.1
6 Egypt	83,870,000	95.1	4.8	6 Egypt	124,380,000	96.6	4.2
7 Iran	77,650,000	99.5	4.4	7 Iraq	94,000,000	99.3	3.1
8 Turkey	75,460,000	98.0	4.3	8 Turkey	88,410,000	97.9	3.0
9 Algeria	37,210,000	97.9	2.1	9 Iran	82,980,000	99.7	2.8
10 Iraq	36,200,000	99.0	2.1	10 Afghanistan	81,870,000	99.7	2.7
Subtotal	1,143,200,000		65.2	Subtotal	1,806,790,000		60.5
Subtotal for rest of world	609,420,000		34.8	Subtotal for rest of world	1,180,600,000		39.5
World total	1,752,620,000		100.0	World total	2,987,390,000		100.0

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050.
Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 10,000. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Table 1. 10 countries with the largest Muslim populations, 2015 and 2060

2015	2015 CHRISTIAN POPULATION	% OF COUNTRY THAT IS CHRISTIAN	% OF WORLD'S CHRISTIAN POPULATION IN 2015	2060	2060 CHRISTIAN POPULATION	% OF COUNTRY PROJECTED TO BE CHRISTIAN	% OF WORLD'S CHRISTIAN POPULATION IN 2060
1 U.S.	248,180,000	76.9%	10.9%	1 U.S.	262,330,000	63.9%	8.6%
2 Brazil	179,910,000	88.5	7.9	2 Brazil	186,550,000	86.0	6.1
3 Mexico	113,620,000	94.6	5.0	3 Nigeria	174,270,000	37.2	5.7
4 Russia	103,490,000	73.1	4.5	4 D.R. Congo	160,070,000	95.7	5.2
5 Philippines	94,300,000	92.5	4.1	5 Philippines	152,320,000	91.9	5.0
6 Nigeria	86,650,000	48.1	3.8	6 Mexico	127,790,000	90.6	4.2
7 D.R. Congo	72,090,000	95.9	3.2	7 Tanzania	117,930,000	67.4	3.9
8 China	70,890,000	5.2	3.1	8 Uganda	96,200,000	83.8	3.1
9 Ethiopia	57,450,000	62.4	2.5	9 Kenya	91,780,000	81.4	3.0
10 Germany	54,880,000	67.3	2.4	10 Ethiopia	87,660,000	57.1	2.9
Subtotal	1,081,460,000		47.5	Subtotal	1,456,900,000		47.7
Subtotal for rest of world	1,194,790,000		52.5	Subtotal for rest of world	1,597,560,000		52.3
World total	2,276,250,000		100.0	World total	3,054,460,000		100.0

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050.
Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 10,000. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Table 2. 10 countries with the largest Christian populations, 2015 and 2060

And if we see the table behind the World Christian Population by region, it shows that in general Latin America - Caribbean, North America, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa are the regions with more Christian population. It is surprising that based on the Pew Research Projection for the year 2050, the region of Sub-Saharan Africa might experience a growth in the population, and therefore the Christian population might grow too, the same that could happen in Middle East-North Africa. However, in percentage the situation is decreasing (Pew Research Center, 2017).

World Christian Population by Region, 2010 and 2050

	YEAR	REGION'S TOTAL POPULATION	REGION'S CHRISTIAN POPULATION	% CHRISTIAN IN REGION
Europe	2010	742,550,000	553,280,000	74.5%
	2050	696,330,000	454,090,000	65.2
Latin America-Caribbean	2010	590,080,000	531,280,000	90.0
	2050	748,620,000	665,500,000	88.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	2010	822,730,000	517,320,000	62.9
	2050	1,899,960,000	1,112,390,000	58.5
Asia-Pacific	2010	4,054,940,000	287,100,000	7.1
	2050	4,937,900,000	381,200,000	7.7
North America	2010	344,530,000	266,630,000	77.4
	2050	435,420,000	286,710,000	65.8
Middle East-North Africa	2010	341,020,000	12,710,000	3.7
	2050	588,960,000	18,180,000	3.1

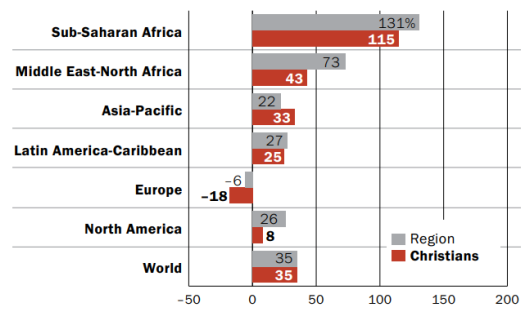
Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050
Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 10,000. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers.

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Table 3. World Christian Population by Region, 2010 and 2050

Christian Population Growth Compared With Overall Growth in Each Region, 2010 to 2050

% increase in population size



Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

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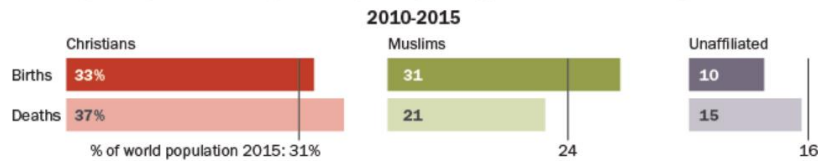
Figure 4. Christian Population growth compared with overall growth in each region, 2010 to 2050

Comparing this data with the rankings from Open Doors of the 50 countries where there is harder persecution, we found that in general, the countries with less freedom are the one with more Muslim population, for instance, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. This might lead the path towards the conditions that explain the persecution in these countries. Moreover, if we look at the rankings of the years 2010, 2015 and 2021 it is verified that the majority of countries from the list represent the Muslim majority countries. Of course, in the list are different countries with a different religion, that is why it is necessary to analyze other factors.

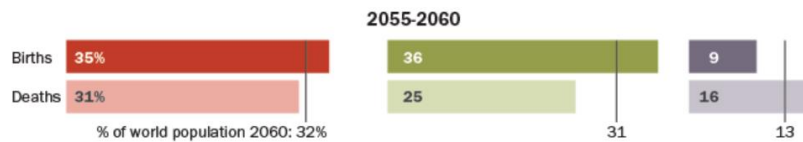
Another reason why this progress might be happening is the differences in the regions and religions. For instance, in a recent article from the Pew Research Center, it explains that the Muslim population usually from the Middle East-North Africa and also Sub-Saharan Africa, usually have a bigger fertility rates, than the Christians. Thus, in the long term, the number of births from Muslims mothers will be higher than the Christians (Pew Research Center, 2017). Although, this could have other factors related, for instance: year of marriage, abortion legislation, civil liberties, etc.

Estimated shares of births and deaths

Compared with their share of the overall 2015 population, Christians make up larger share of all 2010-2015 deaths, Muslims a larger share of births, the unaffiliated a smaller share of births



By 2060, Christians and Muslims will make up a larger share of births, while the unaffiliated will make up a larger share of deaths



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details.
"The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 5. Estimated shares of birth and deaths

Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/>

Regarding the situation of the persecution, here it bright lighter, owing to the countries that are more populated by a Muslim majority population, and have less Christians percentage of population are the ones that appear more in the list of Christian persecution.

Here below there is a comparison of the list from Open Doors of the years 2010, 2015 and 2021. As it shows the list contains a majority of countries from the regions of Middle East-North Africa, Asia-Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa, and some countries from Latin America. Based on the previous analyses, we found that the majority of countries in which there is a harder persecution to Christians are from authoritative governments with Muslim majority population. Therefore, for analyzing this issue in depth we are going to look at the democratic indexes regarding religion of the most persecuted countries, as well as other factors.

COUNTRY 2010	RANK	COUNTRY 2015	RANK	COUNTRY 2021	RANK
NORTH KOREA	1	NORTH KOREA	1	NORTH KOREA	1
IRAN	2	SOMALIA	2	AFGHANISTAN	2
SAUDI ARABIA	3	IRAQ	3	SOMALIA	3
SOMALIA	4	SYRIA	4	LIBYA	4
MALDIVES	5	AFGHANISTAN	5	PAKISTAN	5
AFGHANISTAN	6	SUDAN	6	ERITREA	6
YEMEN	7	IRAN	7	YEMEN	7
MAURITANIA	8	PAKISTAN	8	IRAN	8
LAOS	9	ERITREA	9	NIGERIA	9
UZBEKISTAN	10	NIGERIA	10	INDIA	10
ERITREA	11	MALDIVES	11	IRAQ	11
BHUTAN	12	SAUDI ARABIA	12	SYRIA	12
CHINA	13	LIBYA	13	SUDAN	13
PAKISTAN	14	YEMEN	14	SAUDI ARABIA	14
TURKMENISTAN	15	UZBEKISTAN	15	MALDIVES	15
COMOROS	16	VIETNAM	16	EGYPT	16
IRAQ	17	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	17	CHINA	17
QATAR	18	QATAR	18	MYANMAR	18
CHECHNYA	19	KENYA	19	VIETNAM	19
EGYPT	20	TURKMENISTAN	20	MAURITANIA	20
VIETNAM	21	INDIA	21	UZBEKISTAN	21
LIBYA	22	ETHIOPIA	22	LAOS	22
MYANMAR	23	EGYPT	23	TURKMENISTAN	23
AZERBAIJAN	24	DJIBOUTI	24	ALGERIA	24
ALGERIA	25	MYANMAR	25	TURKEY	25
INDIA	26	PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES	26	TUNISIA	26
NORTHERN NIGERIA	27	BRUNEI	27	MOROCCO	27
OMAN	28	LAOS	28	MALI	28
BRUNEI	29	CHINA	29	QATAR	29
NORTHERN SUDAN	30	JORDAN	30	COLOMBIA	30
KUWAIT	31	BHUTAN	31	BANGLADESH	31
TAJIKISTAN	32	COMOROS	32	BURKINA FASO	32
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	33	TANZANIA	33	TAJIKISTAN	33
ZANZIBAR ISLANDS (TANZANIA)	34	ALGERIA	34	NEPAL	34
TURKEY	35	COLOMBIA	35	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	35
DJIBOUTI	36	TUNISIA	36	ETHIOPIA	36
MOROCCO	37	MALAYSIA	37	MEXICO	37
CUBA	38	MEXICO	38	JORDAN	38
JORDAN	39	OMAN	39	BRUNEI	39
SRI LANKA	40	MALI	40	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	40
SYRIA	41	TURKEY	41	KAZAKHSTAN	41
BELARUS	42	KAZAKHSTAN	42	CAMEROON	42
TUNISIA	43	BANGLADESH	43	BHUTAN	43
ETHIOPIA	44	SRI LANKA	44	OMAN	44
BANGLADESH	45	TAJIKISTAN	45	MOZAMBIQUE	45
PALESTINIAN TERRITORY	46	AZERBAIJAN	46	MALAYSIA	46
BAHRAIN	47	INDONESIA	47	INDONESIA	47
INDONESIA	48	MAURITANIA	48	KUWAIT	48
KYRGYZSTAN	49	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	49	KENYA	49
KENYA (NORTH EATH)	50	KUWAIT	50	COMOROS	50

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION RANK 2010, 2015,2021

Source: Open Doors

Table 4. Christian persecution ranks 2010, 2015 and 2021

b. Democratic analysis

For analyzing the democratic characteristics of the countries in the World we have used the indexes from V-Dem. The indexes used in this case are related to the freedom of religion, the liberty of expression and the restrictions of the government regarding the religion of the State. First of all, regarding the Freedom of religion we see that the most restricted countries effectively coincide with the list from Open Doors. Looking at the comparison of the years 2010 and 2021, the countries with less freedom are North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Eritrea, etc (V-Dem, 2022a).

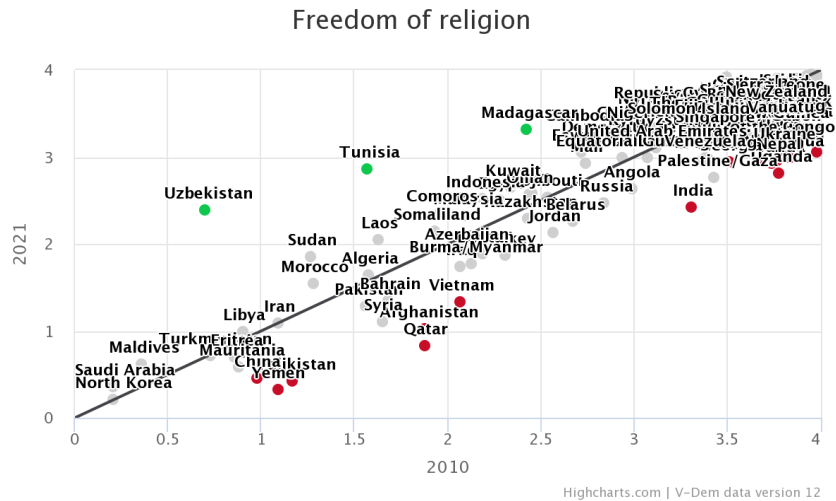


Table 5. Freedom of religion index, V-Dem

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/Yearcomp2Graph/

And if we look at the maps from the years 2010 and 2021 it reveals that the countries with less freedom of religion are the ones that the Islam is the majoritarian religion. For instance, if we observe the year 2010, the region where there is less freedom of religion is mainly Middle East and Asia, Saudi Arabia counts with 0.21, North Korea 0.21, Uzbekistan 0.7, Turkmenistan 0.73, Eritrea 0.86, Mauritania 0.88, Somalia 0.88, Libya 0.9, China 0.98 out of 4 (more freedom). This clearly reveals the severeness of the restriction on the government legislation to prohibit other religions besides the Islam. And therefore, it makes sense the increase of persecution in those countries.

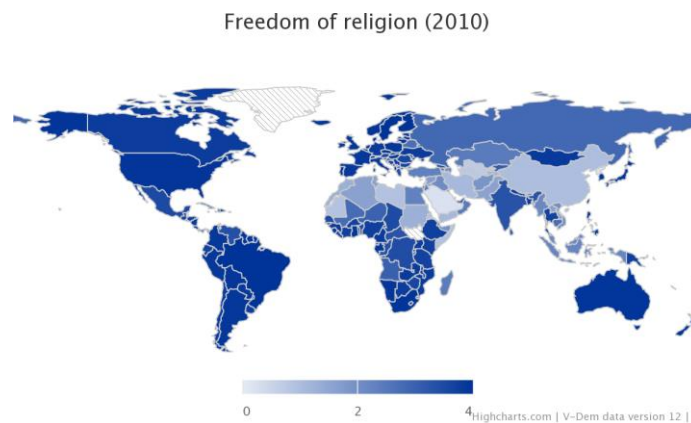


Figure 6. Map of Freedom of Religion (2010), V-Dem

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

This image remains almost the same during the 2010's decade with some minor variations. Now, looking to the map behind of Freedom of religion in the year 2021 we observe some variations. For instance, Yemen counts 0.33, Saudi Arabia 0.35, Tajikistan 0.42, China counts 0.45, Mauritania 0.59, Eritrea 0.7, and North Korea remains with 0.21 being the State with less freedom of religion.

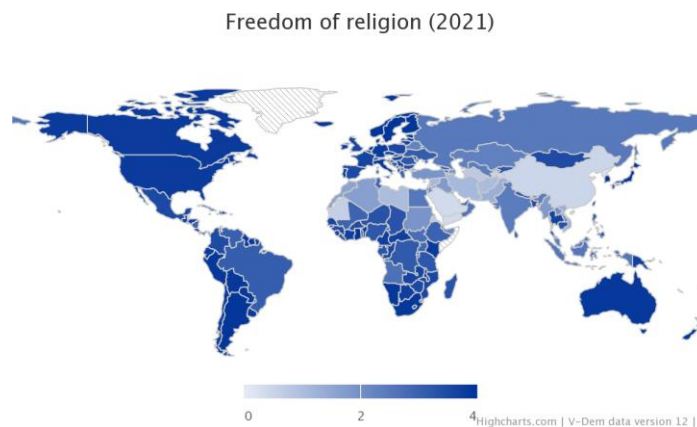


Figure 7. Map of Freedom of Religion (2021), V-Dem

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

Moving to another index, Freedom of expression, it shows more information on the democratic liberties of the States. It is interesting to remark that Open Doors indicates that many countries do not have ‘severe’ or violent expressions of hostility against them, in form of physical violence, torture, or imprisonment, but rather, a ‘permissive’ form of rejection, for instance, the rejection or abandonment of families, communities, neighbors who insight of noticing a relative that confess to be a Christian they distant from them and reject them (Open Doors, 2021). Therefore, this index of Freedom of expression entails many areas such as: media, newspaper, social media, internet, and in the daily basis relations.

Looking to the map of Freedom of expression index of the year 2010 we see almost the same situation as in the map of Freedom of religion. The region that shows less freedom of expression is Middle East and Asia, however, it also shows little freedom in other countries from other regions. For instance, North Korea counts with 0.01, Syria with 0.03, Turkmenistan 0.04, Laos 0.04, Uzbekistan 0.05, Cuba 0.06 (index 0-1).

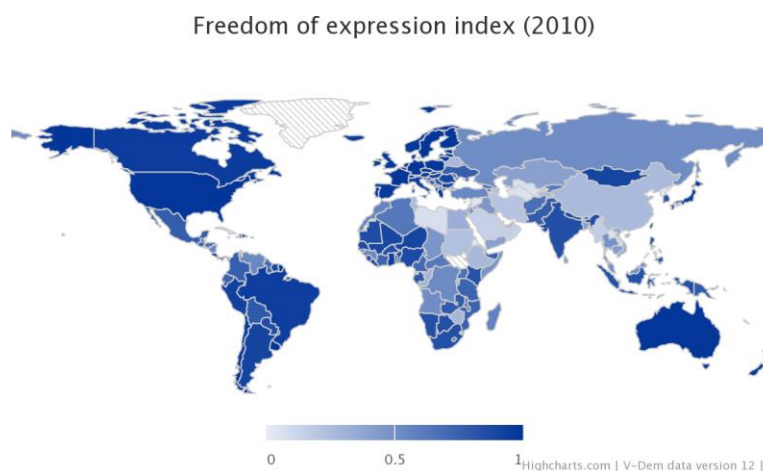


Figure 8. Map of Freedom of expression index (2010), V-Dem

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

In the year 2021, the map changes a little bit, for instance Syria counts with 0.04 as well as Eritrea, Belarus decreases in this index and counts with 0.05, Laos 0.05, Nicaragua counts with 0.11, Cuba 0.12, Turkey and Egypt decrease arriving to 0.14 Egypt and 0.15 Turkey, Afghanistan 0.17, and China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia remain the same. This shows a general decrease in the freedom of expression, not only in the Region of Middle East and Asia, but also in some countries of Europe and Latin America.

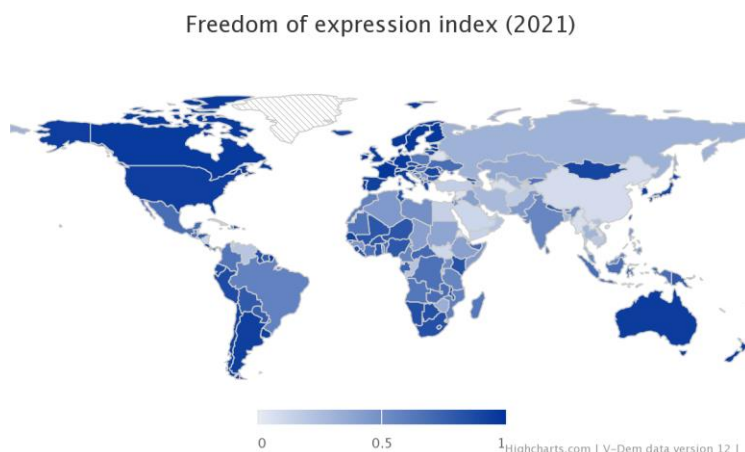


Figure 9. Map of Freedom of expression (2021), V-Dem

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

Therefore, when we look at the Freedom of expression (years 2010 and 2021), the tendency goes even worse, meaning that there are more countries with restrictive legislation that diminish the freedom of expression, in areas as the media, television, Internet, newspaper, or in personal environments.

And when we look at a broader picture, for instance the percentage of population where there are weaker civil liberties we found lower results. Here below is a map from V-Dem that shows the percentage the total population of each country that live in areas where the officials from the government respect less the civil liberties than the country average (V-Dem, 2022b). In other words, the greater the percentage the more people suffer from having weaker civil liberties. Looking at the map behind in the year 2010, we found Malawi with 69.38%, Ethiopia with 64.31%, Turkmenistan with 62.5%, Eritrea 59.5%, and Yemen 54.6%.

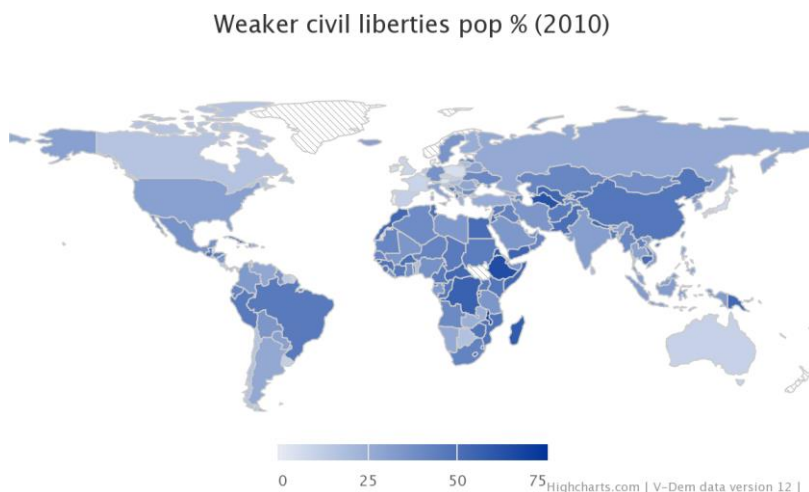


Figure 10. Weaker civil liberties population % (2010)

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

And in the year 2021, the picture gets darker. For instance, Morocco counts with 69%, Papua New Guinea 68%, Syria 67%, Pakistan 63.5%, Bangladesh 61%. At the same time, many countries does not show their percentages.

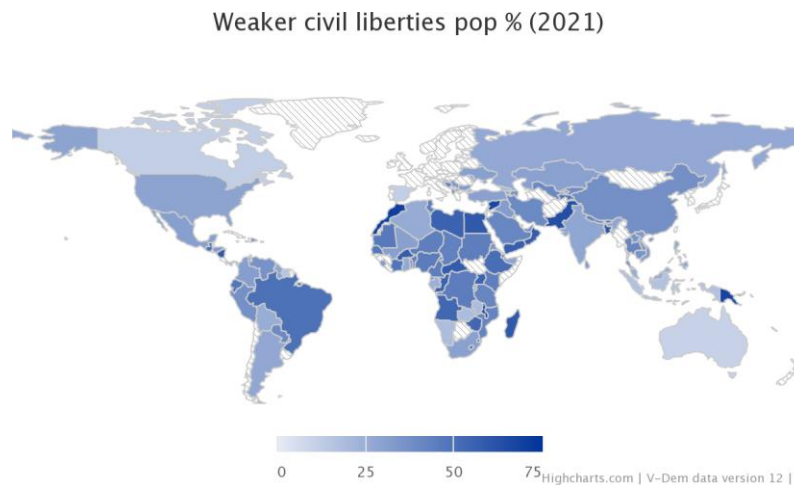


Figure 11. Weaker civil liberties population % (2021)

Source: https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/

Therefore, if we compare the civil liberties of the countries, we found that many of the countries that appear in the list of Open Doors lack civil liberties or have weaker civil liberties. And this trend goes worse during this time.

In the graph behind we found the The World: Freedom House Civil Liberties Score of the year 2016, in which the countries scales from 1 are most free to the 7 least free (The ARDA, n.d). Therefore, comparing the different maps we see this tendency of weaker liberties, lesser freedom of expression and religion in the same countries.

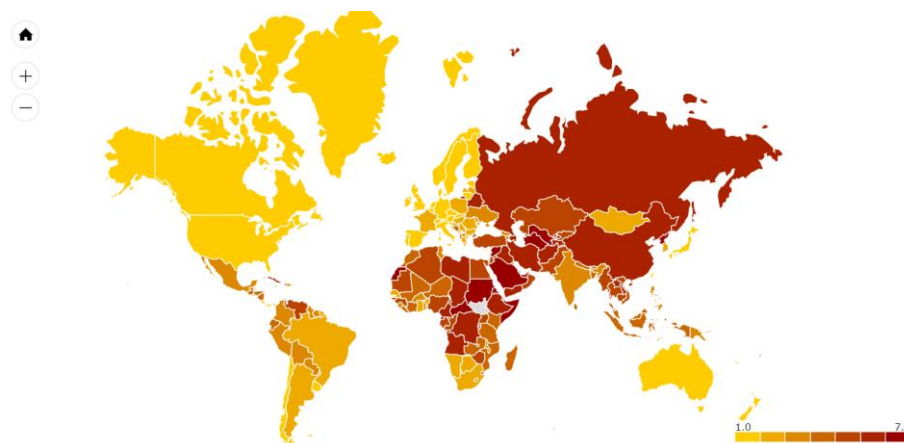


Figure 12. Map of the World, Freedom House Liberties Score (2016)

Source: https://www.thearda.com/internationalData/maps/intMap_world_FHCL.asp

V. The impact

Therefore, after having analyzed the different sources and graphs, we pass to observe the impact of these elements in the Christian population, and more specifically on the persecution of them. First of all we have to analyze the demographic impact.

Demographic impact

The main impact to the lives of persecuted Christian is in great measure caused by violent attacks, killings, torture, and therefore meaning an increase in mortality. As Open Doors specify in their annual reports, they make a distinction between the level of hostility, for instance in forms of rejection, exclusion, oppression, torture, imprisonment, and physical attacks leading to death. In this sense, the recent reports by Christianity Today (Fowler, 2020) mentioned that:

“The number of Christian martyrs worldwide has fallen by half in a decade, according to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. *Although 800,000 Christians were killed in the 2010s*, that was significantly lower than the 1.6 million Christians killed in the 2000s, according to the center’s most recent report. When it comes to tracking global trends in Christianity, the center leads the field. Since it was founded as the World Evangelization Research Center in Kenya in 1965, and then relaunched as the Center for the Study of Global Christianity in 2003, CSGC has monitored a range of global trends, including changes in denominations, populations, conversions, and martyrs.” (Fowler, 2020, Christianity Today).

Thus, some organizations are taking the interest in counting the number of deaths of Christians by persecution, for instance, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, World Evangelization Research Center in Kenya, Center for the Study of Global Christianity, the International Society for Human Rights, and Open Doors, there are differences between them in definitions and monitoring (Fowler, 2020). This implies several issues in order to have a common ground in which elaborate a database, moreover, the religious classification of each organization is different and that presents more divisions among subgroups and religious minorities that make more complicated the measuring of data in regard to mortality, forced migration, and other demographic variations.

For trying to analyze the demographic impact in this report it has taken into account the reports from Open Doors, and its impact on each gender, as well as the impact on the democratic freedoms of the countries where there is more persecution and how it could affect to the well-being of the religious subgroups and religious minorities of Christians.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION RANK 2021

Source: Open Doors

COUNTRY	RANK
North Korea	1
Afghanistan	2
Somalia	3
Libya	4
Pakistan	5
Eritrea	6
Yemen	7
Iran	8
Nigeria	9
India	10

Table 6. Christian persecution rank 2021, Open Doors

To study the demographic impact on the top 10 countries where there is more persecution in the World Watch List 2021, we observe that generally the bigger impact is in the life of women. Although it is difficult to calculate all the variables in these countries, it is true that based on reports of Open Doors and The Voice of the Martyrs, the most vulnerable group are women, who usually are kidnapped and raped. Men also suffer from imprisonment, torture and murders (Open Doors, 2022a).

Following in the analysis of the countries where Christians are more persecuted, we found the case of North Korea, in which there has been a difficulty in finding recent and accurate data. Thus, understanding that the situation has not changed in the last years, Open Doors estimates that there are approximately 400.000 Christians in North Korea, and around 50.000 to 70.000 are imprisoned (Open Doors, 2022b).

The second country is Afghanistan, in which it is estimated that thousands of Christians suffer persecution. This also leads to the same issue as North Korea and it is the limitation on the data available. As it is impossible to be publicly identified as Christian in Afghanistan and the majority of them have to remain in secret or migrate to another country (Open Doors, 2022c).

The following countries from the list are mostly located in the Middle East-North Africa Region, for instance Somalia, Libya and Pakistan. And we see in the table below of the Christian Count and Share of the Middle East-North Africa Region's Population, we see that a greater migration of Christians from these countries is expected.

Christian Count and Share of the Middle East-North Africa Region's Population, 2010 and 2050

	CHRISTIAN POPULATION AND % CHRISTIAN IN 2010	CHRISTIAN POPULATION AND % CHRISTIAN IN 2050 WITH EXPECTED MIGRATION	CHRISTIAN POPULATION AND % CHRISTIAN IN 2050 WITH NO NEW MIGRATION	POPULATION AND % DIFFERENCE IN 2050 WITH/WITHOUT MIGRATION
Middle East-North Africa Region OVERALL	12,710,000 3.7%	18,180,000 3.1%	17,250,000 2.9%	930,000 0.1%
Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates)	3,140,000 7.2%	4,640,000 6.6%	3,180,000 5.4%	1,460,000 1.2%
Countries With Historical Christian Populations (Egypt, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, Syria)	7,450,000 4.8%	9,270,000 3.4%	9,750,000 3.5%	-470,000 -0.1%

Note: Other countries and territories in the region are Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara and Yemen.
Differences are calculated from unrounded numbers.

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

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Table 7. Christian count and share of the Middle East-North Africa Region's Population, 2010 and 2050

This is one of the impacts that will affect this sector of the population: forced migration. As it has been previously mentioned, the unsafety and the weakest conditions for the well-being make many Christians decide to move to another country. This represents some issues in order to comptabilize the motives of migrations if they are related to persecution. For that reason, it would be an interesting topic of further study to make a deeper analysis on the reasons of those movements as well as to elaborate a migration tax for a better understanding of the impact. For instance, in the table below it shows that ‘an estimated number of 2.34 million Christians will have emigrated from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America’ in the period of 2010-2015 (Pew Research Center, 2015). However, to assure that the motives of those migrations are due to persecutions is difficult to confirm, giving the fact that there could be other variables for taking into account in those regions.

Christian Migration, 2010-2015

Estimated net movement, by regions. For example, an estimated 2.34 million Christians will have emigrated from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America in this five-year period.

	TO Asia-Pacific	TO Europe	TO Latin America- Caribbean	TO Middle East- North Africa	TO North America	TO Sub-Saharan Africa
FROM Asia-Pacific		200,000		250,000	440,000	
FROM Europe	270,000		30,000	20,000	220,000	70,000
FROM Latin America- Caribbean	70,000	440,000			2,340,000	20,000
FROM Middle East- North Africa	160,000	10,000			30,000	
FROM North America	30,000	70,000	70,000			
FROM Sub-Saharan Africa	40,000	170,000		10,000	150,000	

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

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Table 8. Christian Migration, 2010-2015

Projected Population Change in Countries With Largest Christian Populations in 2010

	COUNTRY'S POPULATION AS SHARE OF WORLD'S POPULATION IN 2010	COUNTRY'S POPULATION AS SHARE OF WORLD'S POPULATION IN 2050	SHARE OF COUNTRY'S POPULATION THAT IS CHRISTIAN IN 2010	SHARE OF COUNTRY'S POPULATION THAT IS CHRISTIAN IN 2050
1 United States	4.5%	4.2%	78.3%	66.4%
2 Brazil	2.8	2.4	88.9	86.4
3 Mexico	1.6	1.5	95.1	91.4
4 Russia	2.1	1.3	73.3	71.3
5 Philippines	1.4	1.7	92.6	92.0
6 Nigeria	2.3	4.2	49.3	39.3
7 China	19.5	14.0	5.1	5.4
8 Dem. Republic of the Congo	1.0	1.6	95.8	95.7
9 Germany	1.2	0.8	68.7	59.3
10 Ethiopia	1.2	1.6	62.8	58.3
Top 10 (2010) Total	37.5	33.3	40.0	42.2

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Table 9. Projected population change in countries with largest Christian populations in 2010

Besides the migration impact that will have on the persecution, there is the restriction of democratic freedoms, as it has been previously mentioned, the countries where there is more persecution have a lower index of democratic freedom (religion and expression). In fact, from the 5 top countries, Somalia scored 0, Libya 0 and North Korea 0, only Afghanistan 0.17 and Pakistan 0.33 scored. These indexes show the condition of lack of civil liberties in these countries (V-Dem, 2022).

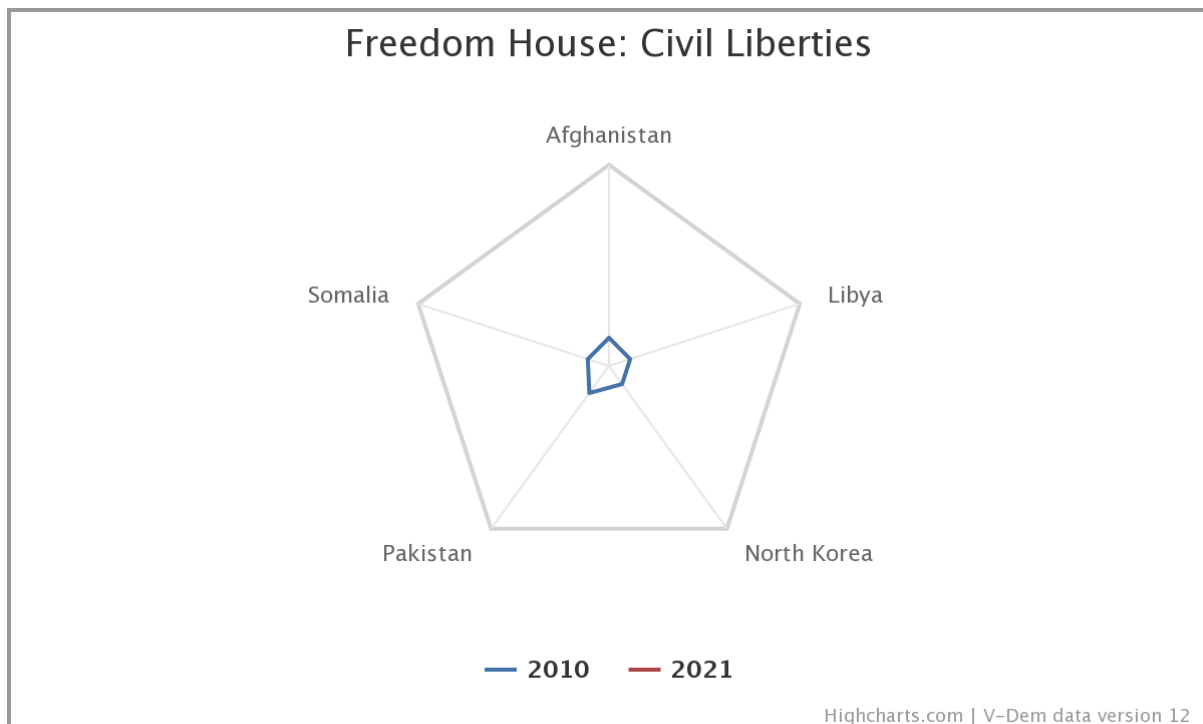


Figure 13. Freedom House: Civil Liberties 2010-2021

Therefore, having in mind all the factors and variables that impact the lives of many Christians persecuted, it is deduced that the well-being conditions are few. Unfortunately, the governments of these countries are the legislators that prohibit Christianity, and the other radical Islamic groups also suppose a threat to their lives. Consequently, after the analysis of the different graphics it ends up with the projection of the Christians in the future. Regarding the conditions of life, it does not seem to change. Thus, the expectation is to see a hidden genocide, the maintenance of torture, imprisonments and a more restrictive legislation in the countries where there is a Muslim majority. On the other hand, it is expected to see other flows of migrations, due to the violence, political instability and unsafety, as well as other motives (Open Doors, 2022a). Moreover, regarding the religious shifts that could happen, it is expected to experience a decline in Europe and North America, while it could grow in Asia (Pew Research, 2025).

VI. Conclusions

Finally, this project concludes with the major findings on the topic analyzed. Firstly, from the general evaluation of the religion distribution during the years 2010-2021 it is found a progressive decline in the percentage of Christians globally. On the contrary, Muslims seem to grow, this could be caused by the higher fertility rate.

Secondly, the relation of the World Watch List from Open Doors and the democratic liberties of the countries where Christians are more persecuted coincide in the fact that where there is less freedom, less democratic liberties and more restrictive legislation tend to be more persecution. This proved to be true in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq.

Thirdly, the regional distribution also affects, given the fact that Christians remain mostly dispersed, while Muslims are more centered in the Middle East-North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa region. This implies that in the future Christians who suffer in these countries opt for moving abroad, therefore, it impacts on the migration flows.

All in all, the consequences are heavy and the future for the persecuted Christians does not look to change, instead, it is expected to become more severe. The graphs show a decrease in liberties and freedom of religion and expression, an increase in the migration motivated by diverse variables, a decrease in birth and increase in mortality rates. To sum up, this project has aimed to open a topic that has remained silenced, hoping to raise some awareness of the situation.

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