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World Watch List 2026: 4,849 Christians Killed for Their Faith, 3,490 in Nigeria

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Persecuted and Forgotten? 2024-2026"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Open Doors' 2026 World Watch List recorded 4,849 Christians killed for faith-related reasons worldwide in a single 12-month period, from October 2024 to September 2025. Nigeria accounted for 3,490 of those deaths - more than 70% of the global total - and the country ranks seventh on the list of the hardest places in the world to be a Christian.

Behind the numbers are names the world barely heard. In Yelewata, a Christian community in Benue State, Fulani militants attacked for four hours in June 2025, killing 258 people - mostly women and children - and burning survivors alive inside their homes. About 3,000 people fled, and the village they left behind was left in ashes.

The list, published in November 2026, counts more than 388 million Christians worldwide - about one in seven believers - facing high levels of persecution or discrimination. That is not a distant statistic. It is one person in every seven who follows Jesus, living with the daily knowledge that their faith could cost them everything.

4,849 Christians Killed: What The World Watch List 2026 Found

The World Watch List is Open Doors' annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most severe persecution. The 2026 edition covers the reporting period from October 2024 to September 2025, and its headline figure - 4,849 killed - counts only deaths directly linked to faith.

The real toll is almost certainly higher. Many killings in remote villages are never reported, never recorded, and never reach a list. The 4,849 are the ones researchers could verify, and each one was a person with a family, a church, and a name.

Nigeria's share of the total is what stops you cold. Of every ten Christians killed for their faith anywhere on earth, seven died in one country. US Officials Tell Congress Violence Against Nigerian Christians Has Not Stopped a Year After CPC Designation reported how American officials were told the same pattern in Washington, a year after Nigeria's designation as a Country of Particular Concern.

Nigeria: 3,490 Deaths, 72% Of The Global Total

Nigeria ranks seventh on the World Watch List, yet it produces most of the world's faith-related killings. The Family Research Council, in an issue brief published in November 2026, put the longer picture in even starker terms: upwards of 50,000 Christians have been martyred in Nigeria since 2009.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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(Hindi) Aaja Changanaacherii Paarela Charcha Besilikaa Banane Kii Taiyaarii Men: 21 November Ko 51,000 Varga Phuta Ke Nae Charcha Kii Pratishthaa
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