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**World Relief & Open Doors US Release New Report on the Rise of Persecuted Christians & Global Displacement Around the World**

*One in Seven Christians Worldwide Now Face Persecution*

**Baltimore, MD (September 20, 2023)** – Today, [World Relief](#) and [Open Doors US](#) published the [2023 “Closed Doors”](#) report detailing the current state of religious persecution around the world and its connection to U.S. refugee resettlement and asylum policies. The report reveals that [one in seven](#) Christians worldwide now suffer from persecution or discrimination – a trend that coincides with a 70% decrease since 2016 in the number of Christians resettled as refugees from the top 50 countries perpetuating Christian persecution.

Along with the release of the report, a joint briefing was held today on Capitol Hill that included special guests, congressional staffers and members of the press. Through the “Closed Doors” report and briefing, the organizations hope to encourage policymakers, presidential candidates and everyday American Christians to be mindful of the impact of restrictive refugee and asylum policies on the persecuted church.

This report has drawn attention from leaders across Christian denominations, including from the National Association of Evangelicals, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“American Christians care deeply about our brothers and sisters around the world who face persecution on account of their faith. Robust refugee and asylum policies are among the most vital tools to offer protection to those denied religious freedom in their countries of origin,” said **Myal Greene, president and CEO of World Relief**. “This updated report reveals that, while our country has made some progress in re-opening the ‘golden door’ to those fleeing persecution on account of their faith since 2020, we’re still far from the levels of 2016 and years prior. I hope this report will spur policymakers to recommit themselves to making our nation a refuge for those fleeing religious persecution, including by rebuilding the refugee resettlement program and opposing harsh restrictions on due process for asylum seekers such as those included in H.R. 2. Just as importantly, I pray it will challenge the church to stand with refugees and asylum seekers and against dehumanizing campaign rhetoric used to describe our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

"The persecution of Christians continues to grow around the globe. As Americans, we must decide how we'll respond," said **Ryan Brown, president and CEO of Open Doors US**. "Our hope is this report not only provides a call to respond, but also helps inform that response."

"The United States is a country that I have known since I was a child is famous for accepting immigrants from around the world, especially persecuted people. After 2016, the year I arrived, the numbers of refugees dropped sharply including a total ban on people from Iran for a few years, including people that are fleeing religious and political persecution," said **Sima Arshadi, a new American who came to the U.S. as an Iranian refugee**. "The US refugee program has been very slow to return to welcoming the numbers of people the US has the capacity to welcome. My prayer is that the US would strongly increase the numbers of persecuted people who are brought here again."

The heightened persecution of Christians around the world coincides with low levels of refugee resettlement that hit historic lows in 2020 and are only slowly rebounding. Resettlement rates, particularly for those fleeing religious persecution, remain low with the United States on track to only resettle approximately 60,000 total refugees in 2023 in spite of a ceiling set at 125,000.

"Christians around the globe are seeking refuge from persecution, and America should be at the forefront of offering them sanctuary as they flee for their lives. Lamentably, our nation falls short on this measure— far short," said **Brent Leatherwood, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission**. "This is even more concerning given the rise in violence and oppression against those who simply seek to share the Gospel and live it out in their daily lives. As a result, we must raise our voices to advocate for those fellow believers or religious minorities fleeing from the tyrannical storms of persecution battering them in societies across the world."

"The Catholic Church remains deeply concerned about the plight of Christians and others around the world who face persecution due to their religious beliefs, as well as the sharp decline in access to protection for these populations," said **Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration**. "My brother bishops and I are grateful for the work of World Relief and Open Doors US on this updated report, which underscores just how grave the situation is for many of the world's Christians. As a country, we must uphold and reaffirm our foundational commitment to religious liberty both at home and abroad, including through the

life-saving avenues of refugee resettlement and asylum. This is a moral imperative as much as it is an integral part of our national identity.”

“At a time when one in seven Christians throughout the world — 360 million Christians — faces high levels of discrimination and persecution, those of us who currently enjoy religious freedom must redouble our efforts to advocate for those of every religion whose lives and livelihoods are at risk,” **said Walter Kim, president of National Association of Evangelicals.** “Our asylum system should be strengthened, not dismantled. Our refugee resettlement program should be increased.”

The report encourages American Christians to stand with the persecuted church through prayer and advocacy. This includes advocating for a robust U.S. Refugee Resettlement ceiling and efforts to reach this ceiling, along with rejecting proposed changes to asylum policy that would create additional barriers to those fleeing a credible fear of persecution.

To access the full report, please visit: [worldrelief.org/closeddoors](http://worldrelief.org/closeddoors)

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### **About World Relief**

[World Relief](http://WorldRelief) is a global Christian humanitarian organization whose mission is to empower the local church to serve the most vulnerable. The organization was founded in the aftermath of World War II to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of war-torn Europe. Since then, for over 75 years, across 100 countries, World Relief has partnered with local churches and communities to develop sustainable, locally-driven solutions to some of the world’s greatest problems. To learn more, visit [worldrelief.org](http://worldrelief.org)

### **About Open Doors US**

For more than 60 years, Open Doors US has worked in the world’s most oppressive and restrictive countries for Christians. Open Doors US works to equip and encourage Christians living in dangerous circumstances with the threat of persecution and equips the Western church to advocate for the persecuted. Christians are one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world and are oppressed in at least 60 countries. For more information, visit [OpendoorsUS.org](http://OpendoorsUS.org)