
Uzbekistan

**Total area:**

447,400 km²

Population:

32,979,000 (2017)

Literacy:

97%

Official languages:

Uzbek

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$7,023 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

68 years

Religions:

88% Muslim, 9% Eastern Orthodox, 3% other religions

Prayer points

Threats of prosecution

In Uzbekistan earlier this year, police raided Urgench Baptists and threatened them with criminal prosecution for meeting at Easter. In August last year there was a raid on a Protestant meeting, and the interrogations and charges against the same Protestants continue. Women in an Urgench church continue to be targeted by male officials, accompanied by flagrant violations by police, bailiffs, and a court of due legal process. As persecution continues, please pray for boldness for these believers, that the Lord will use this situation to call many Uzbeks into his kingdom. (Global Connections - July 2018)

Christians branded as 'extremists'

Religious persecution in Uzbekistan is driven by dictatorial paranoia and, to a lesser extent, organised corruption and Islamic extremism. No religious activities beyond state-run and controlled institutions are allowed, with Christians frequently branded as 'extremists'. As the leadership prepares for transition, taking into account the president's age and health, pressure is unlikely to diminish. Security forces have increased wire-tapping homes in order to find 'extremists'. The crackdown has also targeted religious education of all types, and many control systems and mechanisms derived from the communist system are still in place. For example, it is up to the state to define the illegality of a meeting or a piece of literature. Pray for believers who are detained, fined, and even beaten for owning Christian materials and for pastors trying to lead their churches with very limited resources. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - May 2014)

Strict monitoring

In Uzbekistan, the strict monitoring of all Christian activities has now intensified, even in the Orthodox Church. Outreach, training and youth activities are forbidden in unregistered churches - and in the last ten years only one new church was granted registration. Private Bible study meetings are always

in danger of being closed down. Printing or importing Christian literature is also prohibited. Please pray for pastors trying to lead their churches with limited resources as well as for Muslim-background believers who experience great pressure from family and society. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - September 2012)

Courage in adversity

Churches in Uzbekistan are often shut down and church leaders can be jailed for conducting worship services. Nevertheless, stories have emerged of pastors continuing with their ministry following their release from prison and of churches growing despite harassment by police. Give thanks for the courage of these church leaders and pray that the church in Uzbekistan would grow in number and in faith (Release International - May 2011)

Christians face many obstacles

Uzbek Christians face many obstacles - singing and preaching in the Uzbek language are prohibited and Uzbek Christian fellowships cannot obtain registration, without which their meetings are illegal. The persecution of Christians in Uzbekistan increased in 2009. In a change of strategy, the authorities broadcast a programme called In the Clutches of Ignorance several times on national television. The programme described Christians as Satanists and even accused them of deceiving children and using drugs and money in order to convert people to Christianity. The impact has been to intimidate Christians as well as promoting anti-Christian attitudes and behaviour. In spite of the persecution, the church in Uzbekistan continues to grow and many Christians are actively looking for ways to reach others with the gospel. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - March 2010)

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