



Bible Access List

Where Bible access is most difficult, and Bible shortage is greatest

Cuba

Bible Restrictions Rank: **40**
CONSIDERABLE ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **17**
Bible needs estimate between one and three million



An Overview of Bible access in Cuba

In Cuba, a nation of over 11 million people, the Christian community makes up slightly over 60% of the population, totaling around 6.8 million. Despite this large faith community, estimates suggest that only about half of these believers have access to the Scriptures due to considerable restrictions. This significant gap underscores an urgent need to make Bible access more available.

In Cuba, the government exercises control over religious materials, including Bibles. While owning a Bible is not formally illegal, believers practice discretion, sometimes self-censorship—reading in private and avoiding public display, so as not to attract unwanted attention. It's not fear of the Bible itself, but of what it represents: freedom, truth, and a deeper identity not shaped by state ideology, which can invite scrutiny and hostility.

Importing Bibles is only possible through the Council of Churches—an entity closely aligned with the state—which means access is determined by bureaucratic permission. Unauthorized imports risk confiscation, heavy fines, and even punishment. Printing presses exist, but few churches are allowed to operate them. Even those permitted often face shortages of paper and parts, leaving them incapable of printing. Distribution inside churches happens when possible, but is rarely enough. And outside those walls, permits are required, permits that are almost never approved.

Before we continue, would you pause and pray for Cuba?

How can I pray for Cuba?

- **Pray for Open Access to Scripture.** Pray for innovative solutions and creative strategies that can overcome bureaucratic and governmental obstacles, enabling Bibles to reach the hands of Cuban believers.
- **Protection and Perseverance.** Ask for God's protective hand over Cuban churches, believers, and leaders, providing them courage and perseverance amid censorship and threats of persecution.
- **Global Partnerships for Change.** Pray for international cooperation and effective global initiatives that can navigate Cuba's complex religious landscape, significantly increasing Bible availability and fostering deeper spiritual growth across the nation.

After praying for Cuba, continue reading on the next page to learn more.

Bible Access Restrictions

Some Access Restrictions

- Import restrictions
- Print restrictions
- Storage restrictions
- Ownership restrictions
- Distribution restrictions

Other Limiting Factors

Some Other Factors

- Extremely poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated Bible need** is between 1 and 3 million

Main religion: Christianity

Country population: 11,175,000

Christian population:

6,843,000, 61.24% of total population

World Watch List: #26

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN CUBA?

In Cuba, Bible access is not merely a logistical challenge—it is a tightly controlled issue shaped by layers of government oversight, economic barriers, and systemic censorship. While Christianity is not outlawed, the state imposes intense pressure on religious activity, making it extremely difficult for believers to obtain Bibles. Access is not just limited—it's actively restricted, often in ways that are invisible to the outside world.

Here are the key obstacles that block Bible access across the country:

Government Regulations and Restrictions

The Cuban government tightly regulates all religious activity, including the import, printing, and distribution of Bibles. Religious groups must request government permission for every shipment or production run, but approvals are rare and often come with strings attached. Even when permissions are granted, they are frequently delayed, revoked without explanation, or lost in bureaucratic limbo. This means churches are constantly navigating red tape just to access the most basic spiritual resource: the Bible.

Beyond the paperwork lies an underlying motive of control. By limiting the availability of Bibles, the government restricts the growth and discipleship of Christian communities. Denominational leaders are often left with no clear pathway to legally provide Scripture to their congregations.

Limited Imports and High Costs

Bringing Bibles into Cuba is not just legally complex, it's financially out of reach for many. Due to rigid customs regulations and high import duties, very few religious organizations can afford the cost of importing large quantities of Bibles. Shipments are frequently delayed, inspected, or even seized without notice, especially if the content is considered "ideologically sensitive" by the state.

For those who do manage to bring in Bibles legally, the numbers are nowhere near what's needed. Even pastors and leaders often have to share limited copies among entire congregations. With an economy marked by inflation, food shortages, and economic instability, spending money on a Bible, even if one could be found, is simply not the priority.

Surveillance and Control of Religious Organizations

Religious freedom in Cuba exists on paper, but not in practice. Churches and house church networks are closely monitored by state authorities, with leaders often subjected to surveillance, interrogation, or arbitrary detentions. This atmosphere of fear discourages open religious activity, especially anything involving the distribution of Bibles.

Pastors report being followed, threatened, and warned not to organize large gatherings or distribute materials without approval. This creates a chilling effect where many believers are afraid to even ask for a Bible. Leaders have to be cautious with every shipment, every gathering, and every attempt to share Scripture—because at any moment, it could be interpreted as a subversive act.

Shortage of Local Production

Printing Bibles within Cuba is nearly impossible without direct government approval, which is rarely granted. The state controls all major printing and publishing infrastructure, and independent religious publishing is illegal. Churches that attempt to print Bibles or Christian literature without authorization face serious penalties, including raids, confiscation of materials, or even imprisonment of leaders.

This control ensures that even digital or homegrown solutions are stifled before they begin. Without the ability to print locally, and with limited options for import, the result is a near-total dependence on state-sanctioned channels—which are virtually closed. The few Bibles that make it into circulation are precious and scarce, often passed from one believer to another over years.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Cuba

Cuba	Islamic Oppression	Religious Nationalism	Ethno-religious hostility	Clan oppression	Christian denominational oppression	Communist and post-Communist oppression	Secular intolerance	Dictatorial paranoia	Organized corruption and crime
Persecution Engines →									
Persecution Drivers ↓	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Very weak	Strong	Medium	Strong	Weak
Government officials					+	++++	+++	++++	++
Ethnic group leaders									
Non-Christian religious leaders						+	+	+	
Christian religious leaders					+	++		++	
Violent religious groups									
Normal citizens						+++	++	+++	+
Extended family						+	+	+	
Political parties						++++	+++	++++	++
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups									
Organized crime									
Multilateral org. & Embassies						+	+	+	

Reference

The more fully shaded the circle in orange, the stronger the level of persecution. The number of "+" signs indicates the frequency or intensity of the driving factors behind it.

Very Strong

Strong

Medium

None

To understand the restrictions placed on Bible access in Cuba, it is essential to analyze the persecution against Christians in the country. The primary forces behind this persecution include **communist and post-communist oppression, dictatorial paranoia, and secular intolerance**, primarily driven by **government officials, communist party leaders, and sometimes normal citizens**.

The World Watch List sheds light on the broader context of persecution of Christians. But now we have to ask the question: How does this affect Bible access? Furthermore, where can we pinpoint the problem so we can address the need and demand for Bibles in Cuba?

A CLOSER LOOK AT PERSECUTION ENGINES

A persecution engine is simply this: the source of persecution in the country. A persecution driver (or actor) is the one “driving” the persecution. Taking a closer look at these engines and drivers, in proper context, will give us insight on how we can solve the problems of Bible access in the country.



A Nation Under Ideological Rule

Following the Cuban revolution, the country was constitutionally mandated to uphold Communist ideology—an ideology enforced through every societal structure, including religious institutions. The Office of Religious Affairs (ORA), a body within the Communist Party, controls all religious activity and tightly regulates what is permitted.

Churches that are not registered with the state—mostly Protestant and Evangelical denominations—face severe reprisals. These include denial of building permits, the threat of demolition, and even outright closure. The Assemblies of God denomination has had multiple churches shut down and demolished, especially after being accused of encouraging political dissent during protests back in 2021. The government also uses informants embedded in religious communities to monitor sermons and identify “counter revolutionary” speech. This widespread surveillance leads to self-censorship among pastors, especially when informants include even their own family members.

Christian materials, especially Bibles, are subject to strict control. Imported religious literature is limited, domestic printing is monitored, and all religious content must align with state-approved ideologies. Leaders who resist these controls face not only censorship but also smear campaigns, travel bans, denial of basic services, and sometimes even forced exile.

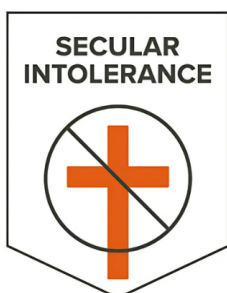


Power Over Christian Expressions

The Cuban regime perceives any independent religious activity as a direct threat to its authority. As a result, church leaders who speak out against government actions, or support protestors, are often met with swift retaliation. Many have been arbitrarily arrested or subjected to continuous surveillance. Some pastors have been detained without due process for over a year, while others have faced forced displacement or had their homes raided.

Christian leaders who attempted to share their views on democracy, religious freedom, or biblical values—especially those who criticized the Family Code reforms—were labeled enemies of the regime. This label exposes them to a wide range of punishments, including threats of losing custody of their children and denial of medical care or access to hospitals.

Even legally registered churches are not safe. Permits for building renovations have been revoked without explanation, and services have been banned under vague pretexts. In many cases, even routine religious activities have been criminalized when seen as opposing the regime.



Silencing Faith in Public Life

Secular intolerance further compounds these challenges. Through the education system, Christians, especially children, are subjected to Marxist indoctrination. If parents try to raise their children in the Christian faith, they are viewed as enemies of the revolution and face penalties, including the risk of criminal charges.

Public expressions of faith, such as prayer events or processions during Holy Week, have been arbitrarily canceled by authorities. Some religious gatherings were halted under the guise of public order, but the underlying motive appears to be a deep-seated fear of religion as a form of civil resistance.

The government also restricts Christian access to digital resources. Through its control of the telecommunications infrastructure, authorities monitor internet usage, block access to Christian websites, and penalize those who share religious content online. While access to Bible apps is generally safe, Christians need to practice caution when accessing Christian materials.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN CUBA

The need for Bibles in Cuba isn't just critical and widespread, but an emergency that demands the attention of the global church. Research estimates indicate that around half of Christians have access to a Bible. To address this, it is estimated that well over **one million Bibles** are needed to fill in the gap. Additionally, Bibles are needed to adequately support seekers who are looking to explore the Christian faith.

Given that the church hasn't grown in the last 5 years, it is critical to make Bibles more available in a country under the communist ideology.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

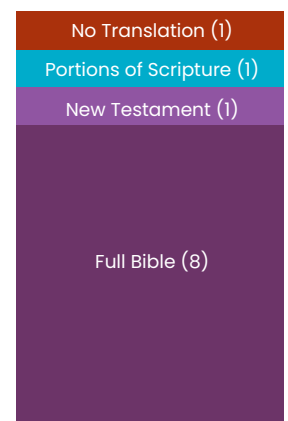
When considering Bible formats, the primary and most immediate need is for **printed Bibles**, due to their accessibility and practicality. However, **audio and digital formats** are also essential for broader distribution, particularly to reach younger generations and remote.

The Gap in Bible Translations

In terms of translations, Christians across Cuba speak at least 11 different languages, underscoring the complexity and urgency of translation needs. Although significant strides have been made, a gap remains.

- Only **8** have the full Bible translated.
- **1** language has access solely to the New Testament.
- **1** language has only portions of Scripture translated.
- **1 more language has no translation of any Bible content whatsoever**

This still leaves a group of believers completely without access to the Word of God in their heart language. Is it too much to ask for just one more translation to fill in this gap?



Spoken Languages with Believers in Cuba

THE CLARION CALL

Now is the time for the global church to rise and respond to this critical spiritual crisis in Cuba. The brutal reality is this: under Cuba's communist regime, access to Bibles remains restricted, compounded by intense social and political pressures that make it difficult for believers to receive the Bible.

As Christians called to spread the Word of God, it is our privilege and duty to stand alongside our Cuban brothers and sisters. Together, let us commit resources, prayers, and concerted efforts to meet this urgent need, ensuring every Cuban believer and seeker has access to the transforming power of Scripture. The hour is critical; the call is clear—will you answer?



-0.7%

Annual Church
Growth



Bibles needed for both

**Believers
& Seekers**



1-3 million

Bible needs estimate



**Printed
Bible**

Preferred Format



**Audio &
Internet Bible**

Format 2nd Priority