



Bible Access List

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

Algeria

Bible Restrictions Rank: **8**
EXTREME ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **61**
Bible needs estimate is less than ten thousand



An Overview of Bible access in Algeria

Algeria, a North African nation of over 46 million people, is home to a small but courageous Christian population, numbering less than 1%, which is just a little over 170,000. Given the already small number, it is estimated that less than a third of Algerian Christians have consistent access to Scripture due to extreme restrictions, revealing a significant and urgent need to bridge this gap to help support the church.

A complex web of legal, political, and societal barriers severely restricts Bible access in Algeria. Ordinance 06-03, enacted in 2006, criminalizes printing, distributing, or possessing religious materials outside government-approved channels, creating an environment of fear and self-censorship. While theoretically, the Algerian Bible Society (branch of the United Bible Societies) is allowed to import Scripture, reports confirm that since 2018, no new shipments have made it through customs due to bureaucratic blockage at Algerian ports.

Even more troubling, there is no legal mechanism for churches to register or operate openly. While Christians may quietly keep a Bible, it still comes with high risk. The pressure is significantly higher for believers from a Muslim background (MBBs), who face not only state monitoring but severe pressure from their families and communities. Confiscation of Bibles during church raids is not uncommon, despite these materials being permitted in theory. On certain occasions, owning Scripture in Arabic or Kabyle can lead to interrogations, imprisonment, or expulsion from one's home.

Foreign Christians also face discrimination. While Western expatriates may own a Bible with limited scrutiny, Sub-Saharan African Christian students, many of whom live in shared housing, are often pressured or harassed if seen possessing Christian materials.

The lack of access to Bibles is not merely a result of persecution, but also systemic neglect. The closure of churches has halted nearly all forms of communal discipleship. With increased monitoring of online activities and heightened fear of arrest, many Christians are left isolated, cut off from the Word of God that sustains their faith. For a nation where the majority of believers are first-generation converts, the absence of Scripture is devastating.

Before we continue, would you take a pause to pray for Algeria?

How can I pray for Algeria?

- **For Protection.** Pray for Algerian believers, especially new believers, that they may find strength and encouragement through underground fellowship and digital resources. Pray for the safety of those facing threats from both state and society.
- **For Provision and Open Access.** Ask God to reopen doors for the import and distribution of Bibles, and for the Bible Society's shipments to be released. Pray for creative and secure ways to get Scripture into the hands of believers and seekers.
- **For the Growth of the Body of Christ.** Despite severe pressure, the Algerian Church continues to exist. Pray for believers to be nourished in their faith and for the Spirit to move through homes, small groups, and digital platforms—so that God's Word can continue to transform lives.

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

Bible Access Restrictions

Extreme Access Restrictions

- No Importing
- No Printing
- No Storage
- Ownership restrictions for part of population
- No distribution

Other Limiting Factors

Considerable Other Factors

- Extremely poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is very low, **estimated Bible need is <10 thousand**

Main religion: Islam

Country population: 46,279,000

Christian population:

171,000, 0.37% of total population

World Watch List: #19

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN ALGERIA?

Widespread Suppression of Non-Muslims

In Algeria, the primary barriers to Bible access are driven by a legal and administrative system designed to suppress non-Muslim worship, alongside deeply embedded societal hostility. The 2006 *Ordinance to Regulate Non-Muslim Worship* (Ordinance 06-03) criminalizes public expressions of Christianity, prohibits proselytism, and has been used to justify the closure of every Protestant church in the country.

Today, not a single Protestant church, including those affiliated with the Evangelical Protestant Church of Algeria (EPA), is operating openly. Christians meeting in private homes risk prosecution, fines, and imprisonment under charges of unauthorized religious assembly.

Daily Risks and Legal Persecution

Christians face legal prosecution simply for meeting together or discussing their faith publicly. Between 2023 and 2025, more than 50 Christians were prosecuted under Ordinance 06-03. Charges include “practicing worship without prior approval,” “proselytism,” and “holding worship in a building not permitted for worship.” These cases are not theoretical, pastors have received prison sentences and fines for merely gathering with families to worship in closed church compounds.

Muslim Background believers or MBBs, who make up the majority of Algerian believers, are especially vulnerable. Extended families often respond with physical abuse, house arrest (especially for women), and forced expulsion.

Societal Hostility and Community Pressure

Beyond government restrictions, social ostracism and mob pressure severely hinder access to Bibles. Muslim Background believers or MBBs are routinely harassed, excluded from community life, and discriminated against in the workplace. In many regions, especially in the Arab-dominated south, public expression of Christianity can provoke threats, job loss, or physical danger. Simply displaying a Bible or Christian symbol can expose believers to questioning or violence.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Algeria

Algeria	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	Reference
Persecution Engines →										<p>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.</p>
Persecution Drivers ↓	Very strong	Not at all	Medium	Medium	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Strong	Not at all	
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										

In Algeria, multiple persecution forces operate simultaneously to restrict Bible access, including **Islamic Oppression**, **Dictatorial Paranoia**, **Clan Oppression**, and **Ethno-Religious Hostility**. These forces are fueled by government officials, extended family members, radical Islamic leaders, and local ethnic authorities.

The World Watch List of Open Doors 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 Algeria?

A CLOSER LOOK AT PERSECUTION ENGINES



Enforced Conformity Through Fear

Islamic oppression in Algeria is systemic and deeply entrenched in both law and society. Nearly all Algerian Christians are Muslim Background believers, and for these believers, persecution often begins at home. Family members are the primary enforcers of Islamic orthodoxy, subjecting MBBs to physical abuse, house arrest, inheritance loss, forced divorce, and even the removal of child custody. At least 20 Christians in 2024 faced direct abuse from family and government authorities.

This oppression is further reinforced by religious leaders who preach intolerance, and by mobs who report Christians to police. Government rhetoric echoes this sentiment. In one telling example, President Tebboune declared on National Martyr Day that Algeria must resist "conspiracies of Christianization and conversion".

Even Christian literature and media are viewed with suspicion. Laws criminalize anything that might "shake the faith of a Muslim," with violations carrying harsh prison sentences. In 2024, a pastor's one-year sentence was upheld for simply gathering Christian families in a closed church compound.



A State That Controls Faith Expressions

Algeria's government, dominated by the National Liberation Front since independence, remains suspicious of religious diversity, especially anything perceived as Western or evangelical. Under the guise of maintaining national identity and unity, the state has forcibly shut down every Protestant church in the country. As of today, none of the 47 EPA-affiliated congregations or independent Protestant churches remain open.

This crackdown includes harassment, constant surveillance, and ongoing prosecutions. Christians face legal charges under Ordinance 06-03, which heavily restricts non-Muslim worship. More than 50 believers have been prosecuted in recent years. Online Christian activity is also a target; believers fear that their phones are tapped and their emails monitored. Christians attempting to import or print Bibles face immediate roadblocks under government watch.



Community Pressure to Conform

In many Arab regions of Algeria, tribal structures still dominate social life. Clan oppression stems from a cultural code where family honor is paramount. MBBs, especially women, who leave Islam are seen as betraying not only their religion but their entire family and tribe. Village elders often lead the charge in pressuring families to take action, while wider communities shun or retaliate against MBBs through social exclusion or loss of employment.

Female MBBs in particular are subject to extreme restrictions. Some are kept under house arrest by relatives, barred from contacting Christians or even watching Christian TV. This forced isolation cuts them off from spiritual support and any access to Bibles.



Suppressing Kabyle Identity

Most Algerian Christians live in the Kabyle region, a historically marginalized Berber area with a distinct language and culture. The central government has long viewed the Kabyle identity—and its openness to Christianity—as a threat to national Arab-Islamic unity. Ethnic tensions spill into religious life.

Churches in Kabyle areas are heavily monitored, restricted, or shut down altogether. The state's refusal to register churches, and accusations of Kabyle Christians supporting separatist groups, further intensify the crackdown.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN ALGERIA

In many regions, especially among Berber-speaking communities in Kabylia, Scripture is cherished but scarce, while in Arab-dominated areas, possession of a Bible can lead to harassment, imprisonment, or worse. In a country where believers risk everything for their faith, a number fewer than 10,000 Bibles to meet the need can already spark something great.

A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

Despite increasing government pressure, Algeria's underground Church continues to grow. In fact, over the past five years, the Christian population has expanded the last few years, primarily through personal evangelism and the quiet witness of house churches. This expansion has far outpaced the availability of Scripture, making the supply of Bibles a top priority to nurture spiritual growth and disciple the next generation of believers.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

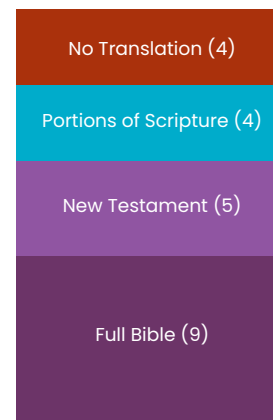
When it comes to format, **printed Bibles** remain the most urgent need, especially for believers in remote and rural areas where digital access is unreliable or unsafe. **Audio Bibles** are also a vital tool, particularly for women, those who are illiterate, and believers in highly restricted communities who must worship in secret.

The Translation Gap

Algeria's believers speak at least 22 languages. Of these languages:

- only **9** have a full translation of the Bible
- **5** more translations of the New Testament only
- **4** languages have only a portion of the Bible translated
- **Another 4 languages have no translation at all**

That means entire ethnic and linguistic communities remain unreached by the Word of God. Translation projects are urgently needed to ensure that every Algerian believer can encounter Scripture in a language that speaks to the heart.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Algeria

THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Algeria is not simply an access problem, it is a lifeline for a persecuted and resilient Church. Amidst church closures, legal intimidation, and family rejection, Algerian Christians are crying out for the Word of God. This is a moment for the global Church to respond—with prayer, with provision, and with partnership.

Let us not turn away from this cry. Let us commit to putting Bibles in the hands of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us stand with Algeria's courageous believers by investing in the translations, the effective formats, and the delivery methods that will break through the barriers of fear, language, and law.

Now is the time. Before another church is closed. Before another MBB is silenced. Before another generation grows up without the Gospel.

Let us act, so that the light of God's Word may shine in every corner of Algeria.

