



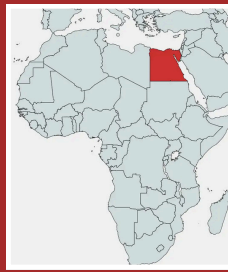
Bible Access List

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

Egypt

Bible Restrictions Rank: **51**
SOME ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **25**
Bible needs estimate between five hundred thousand and one million



An Overview of Bible access in Egypt

Egypt, a nation of over 114 million people, is home to an estimated 9% Christian population. Most belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, while smaller Catholic and Protestant communities make up nearly 1 million believers. Though Christianity has deep roots in Egypt's history, access to the Bible for all people from different religions in Egypt remains limited due to some access restrictions for specific groups. Research indicates that currently approx. 60% of believers own a Bible, highlighting a need to bring God's Word.

While Christians are legally allowed to own Bibles, public distribution is limited to Christian communities and can only take place within church grounds. The government enforces strict control over religious activities, restricting the import and distribution of Bibles outside of these settings. Authorities confiscate printed and digital copies at airports and border checkpoints if proselytization is suspected. Sharing a Bible with a non-Christian can result in legal consequences, community hostility, or even violent retaliation. For Muslim Background Believers (MBBs), accessing the Bible can lead to dire consequences. MBBs often face rejection, social ostracism, and violence from their families and communities. Security forces monitor and harass MBBs, and some have been detained or forced to remain silent about their faith. The simple act of owning a Bible can expose them to legal accusations, imprisonment, or even mob violence in rural areas, especially in Upper Egypt.

Widespread poverty in Egypt leaves a third of the population struggling to meet basic needs, making the cost of a Bible out of reach for many Christians. Low literacy rates, especially in rural and impoverished areas, further limit access to Scripture, highlighting the need for audio Bibles and oral teaching. While internet access is common in cities, some of the rural areas remain disconnected. Even where digital Bibles are available, the high cost of smartphones and data is a limiting factor for many lower-income Egyptians.

Before we continue, can you take a pause and pray for Egypt?

How can I pray for Egypt?

- **Provision and More Access.** Pray that Bibles reach those who need them most, particularly in restricted areas and among MBBs facing persecution. Ask for divine intervention to ensure that Scripture can be shared discreetly and safely.
- **Global Partnerships.** Pray for strong alliances between Egyptian believers and the global church to enhance Bible distribution efforts. Ask for wisdom and protection for those involved in Bible unofficial distribution.
- **Change of Heart and Openness to the Gospel.** Pray for government and community leaders to allow greater religious freedom. Ask that Egyptian Christians may boldly practice their faith, and that Muslims seeking Christ would find safe ways to access His Word.

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


Bible Access Restrictions

Some Access Restrictions

-  Import restrictions for part of the population
-  Print restrictions for part of the population
-  Storage restrictions for part of the population
-  Ownership restrictions for part of the population
-  Distribution restrictions for part of the population

Other Limiting Factors

Some Other Factors

-  Pockets of poverty


Bible Shortages Among Believers

-  Bible ownership is over 50%, **estimated** Bible need is between 500 thousand and 1 million

Main religion: Islam

Country population: 114,484,000

Christian population:

-  10,084,000, 8.81% of total population

World Watch List: #40

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN EGYPT?

Hostility Towards Christianity

In parts of Egypt, especially in **Upper Egypt** and rural regions, Christians face persistent societal hostility that significantly restricts their ability to access and distribute Bibles. While the Egyptian constitution guarantees religious freedom, in practice, Christians—particularly MBBs—are often targeted by local mobs, facing threats, harassment, and even displacement.

Areas such as **Minya, Assiut, and Sohag Governorates** are particularly volatile, where violent attacks on Christian communities occur frequently. In many cases, the mere rumor of a new church being built can incite mob violence, leading to homes being burned, Christian families being forced out, and access to religious materials, including Bibles, becoming nearly impossible.



The influence of Salafist movements, an Islamic extremist organization, in these rural areas compounds the dangers. Salafist groups wield significant control over local communities, fostering an environment where Christians are treated as second-class citizens. Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood, though officially banned, continues to fuel anti-Christian sentiment in conservative regions. The terror group's radical ideology, which historically framed Christians as enemies of Islam, contributes to a climate of intolerance where mob violence against Christians is normalized or even justified.

The absence of strong law enforcement in these areas further emboldens perpetrators, leaving Christians vulnerable, with attackers often escaping punishment. In some cases, authorities side with the aggressors, fearing backlash from Islamist groups or preferring to maintain "public order" at the cost of Christian security. As a result, owning, distributing, or even reading a Bible in these regions can come at a great personal risk.

Daily Risks and Bible Access

Even in cities where churches exist, Bible distribution is strictly limited within church compounds. Christians face constant surveillance from Egyptian intelligence services, and any perceived effort to evangelize or distribute Christian materials outside church settings is met with harassment and interrogation.

For Muslim-background believers (MBBs) who have converted to Christianity, owning a Bible can be a life-threatening risk. Many are forced to practice their faith in secrecy, without access to Scripture, fearing that exposure could lead to arrest, torture, or even death at the hands of their own families.

Egypt's blasphemy laws further restrict Bible access. Any Christian accused of "insulting Islam" can be prosecuted, with such accusations often used as pretexts to justify violence against Christians. In 2024, a Christian man was imprisoned and severely beaten after being accused of proselytizing simply for possessing Christian materials.

Poverty and Practical Barriers

Beyond persecution, economic hardship makes Bible access even more difficult. Egypt is experiencing one of its worst economic crises, with inflation around 25% and nearly 60% of the population struggling to survive. In this environment, purchasing a Bible is not a priority for many Christians who are barely making ends meet and being semi-illiterate.

Additionally, bureaucratic obstacles and import restrictions make obtaining Bibles difficult. While Egypt allows churches to print and distribute Christian materials to Christians, the process is heavily regulated. Christian bookstores exist, but they are limited in number (often due to economic reasons!) and face scrutiny, restricting wider distribution.

Limited Access to Digital and Audio Bibles

Though Egypt has relatively high internet penetration, Christian digital resources can be subject to suspicion. There are reports that some Christian websites and platforms that provide Bible downloads can be blocked by the government, and sharing digital Christian content can lead to arrest if perceived to be used for proselytization.

For those without internet access, alternative formats like audio Bibles would be an option, but over a third of the population lacks electricity in some rural areas, making digital solutions unreliable. Furthermore, almost a quarter of the population are illiterate, meaning that even when Bibles are available, some of the believers cannot read them.

Hostile Community and Family Pressure

For many Egyptian Christians, particularly MBBs, persecution starts in their own homes. Family members view conversion as a disgrace to their honor, leading to forced house arrests, beatings, and sometimes murder to force MBBs back to Islam.

Even among long-established Christian communities, discrimination is embedded in society. Christian children in public schools face bullying and are sometimes forced to memorize Quranic verses. In some cases, mobs have targeted Christians for simply expressing their faith in daily life.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Egypt

Egypt	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 ↓	Strong	Not at all	Not at all	Weak	Strong	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										

Egypt faces significant challenges regarding Bible access due to three primary forces. These include **Islamic oppression, dictatorial paranoia, and Christian denominational protectionism**. The primary drivers behind these forces are mainly **government officials, Christian religious leaders, normal citizens, and extended family**.

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 Egypt?

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 Difficult Barrier to Overcome

Islamic oppression is one of the strongest forces restricting Bible access in Egypt, permeating **family, community, and national** life. Egyptian society, deeply influenced by Islamic traditions, reinforces the **second-class status** of Christians, making it difficult for them to obtain or distribute Bibles freely. MBBs face the most extreme consequences—many are disowned, forced into hiding, or even physically attacked by their own families. Legally, they remain registered as Muslims, which means their children are automatically classified as Muslim as well, cutting them off from Christian education and restricting their access to Scripture. Even possessing a Bible can invite severe repercussions, particularly for those who have left Islam.

The Salafist movement, which advocates a rigid, literal interpretation of Islam, plays a key role in shaping the societal hostility towards Christians. Its influence, along with the remnants of the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideological framework (despite its official ban) continues to drive intolerance, reinforcing the idea that Christianity is an unacceptable deviation from the dominant religious identity.

In rural areas, particularly in **Upper Egypt**, the mere rumor of a new church or a blasphemy accusation can spark mob violence, often orchestrated by radical Islamic groups. Salafist leaders frequently incite hostility, portraying Christians as a threat to the purity of the Muslim community. As a result, homes are set on fire, businesses are attacked, and entire Christian communities are driven out. These attacks frequently force believers to flee, leaving behind not only their homes but also their Bibles, which are often burned or confiscated by the attackers. Meanwhile, Egypt’s **blasphemy laws** serve as a powerful tool of suppression, disproportionately targeting Christians who attempt to share their faith. A simple discussion about Christianity or an online post perceived as critical of Islam can lead to arrests, imprisonment, or even exile, effectively silencing Christian voices.

Although large-scale terrorist attacks have decreased, individual radicalized Muslims continue to target Christians, particularly those involved in Bible distribution or evangelism. Churches and Christian bookstores must operate cautiously, as any perceived attempt at proselytizing can lead to violent retaliation or government-ordered closures. In this climate of fear, surveillance, and societal hostility, access to God’s Word remains a daily struggle for many Egyptian Christians, underscoring the urgent need for both physical Bibles and digital solutions that can withstand the forces working against them.



A Regime of Tight Control Over Society

Egypt's authoritarian government, under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, maintains strict control over religious groups, including Christians. While the administration outwardly promotes religious tolerance, in practice, freedom of religion remains highly restricted. Churches have welcome increased protection against radical Islamists by the al Sisi administration, but churches are under constant surveillance, forced to submit event schedules to authorities, while police presence at services ensures that sermons remain within state-approved boundaries. Any attempt to distribute Christian materials, including Bibles, is closely monitored, and those suspected of evangelism—especially among Muslims—risk arrest or worse. MBBs, in particular, face severe repression, often subjected to **interrogations, detentions, and intimidation tactics** designed to silence them. Some have been forced to recant their faith, while others disappear into the system, leaving their families without answers.

Beyond direct intimidation, **bureaucratic barriers serve as a covert means of Bible restriction**. The Egyptian government enforces stringent regulations on the **import, printing, and distribution** of Christian literature, creating a maze of red tape that makes legal access nearly impossible. Permits for Bible shipments are routinely delayed or denied without explanation, and local printing is heavily restricted. Even officially recognized churches struggle to obtain the necessary approvals, leaving many Christian communities without access to Scripture. These systematic obstacles, combined with the threat of state repression, ensure that Bible access in Egypt remains a privilege for the few rather than a right for all.



Internal Conflict and Barriers

While the Coptic Orthodox Church represents over 90% of Egypt's Christian population, its dominance extends beyond religious tradition into controlling Christian activities, including Bible access. Part of the Orthodox leadership, aiming to preserve doctrinal authority, actively discourages its members from engaging with Evangelicals and Protestants. In some cases, families who receive financial aid or social support from the church risk losing assistance if they are found attending non-Orthodox services or accepting Christian literature from outside groups. MBBs or those who seek spiritual growth outside the Orthodox framework often find themselves marginalized, with limited access to non-Orthodox biblical resources.

Beyond doctrinal divisions, Bible distribution efforts by Evangelical and Protestant organizations face resistance not only from state authorities but sometimes also from the Orthodox establishment itself. Part of the Orthodox hierarchy prefers centralized control over Christian materials, fearing that independent Bible distribution may promote theological perspectives that challenge traditional teachings.

This internal opposition adds yet another layer of difficulty to Bible access in Egypt, compounding the challenges already imposed by the state and broader societal pressures.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN EGYPT

Despite having the largest Christian population in the Middle East, Bible access in Egypt remains not without challenges. With over 10 million Christians, the majority belonging to the Coptic Orthodox Church, research indicates there is a definite demand for Bibles, mostly among Orthodox believers, but also for Protestants and Evangelicals. In addition, research indicates there is a definite demand for seekers as well. Overall, the **Bible needs** are estimated between **500,000** and **1 million**.

An Enduring Church, A Persistent Need

Research shows that the church has increased in size during the last five years. The Orthodox Church remains the dominant Christian group in Egypt, with other denominations representing a smaller fraction of the Christian population. Unlike Protestant communities, which often have access to foreign Bible suppliers, the Orthodox believers—who make up the vast majority—face severe shortages. For seekers, it is difficult and dangerous to access Bibles, leaving those who are exploring Christianity with no access to God’s Word.

Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

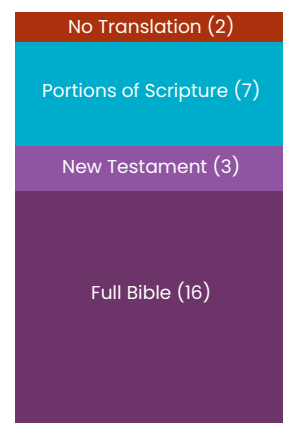
In Egypt, **print Bibles are the most needed format**, followed by internet access to digital Bibles. While over 70% of the population has internet access, digital Bible distribution can be part of the strategy to address the shortage; however, there are reports that some monitoring of Christian websites is taking place, and occasionally, sites are shut down. This makes physical copies of the Bible an urgent priority—especially in Orthodox communities where traditional religious practices emphasize the use of printed Scripture in personal devotion and liturgy.

The Challenge of Bible Translations

Egypt is home to a linguistically diverse Christian population; known believers speak a total of 28 different languages:

- **16** languages have a full Bible translation.
- **3** languages only have the New Testament.
- **7** languages have only portions of Scripture translated.
- **2** languages remain completely without any Bible translation, leaving them without access to Scripture in their heart language

This translation gap is not something we should ignore, particularly for believers in Upper Egypt and rural areas, where literacy rates are lower and access to Christian materials is restricted.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Egypt

THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Egypt is more than just a logistical challenge; it represents a deep spiritual hunger among millions of Christians who continue to face discrimination, poverty, and systemic barriers to religious freedom.

Now more than ever, the **Christian community in Egypt needs the encouragement, hope, and truth found in the Word of God.** By prioritizing innovative solutions and committed efforts, we can bridge the Bible access gap and empower Egypt's Christian population to stand firm in their faith despite opposition.



1.3%

Annual Church Growth



Bibles needed for both

**Believers
& Seekers**



**500k-
1 million**

Bible needs estimate



**Printed
Bible**

Preferred Format



**Internet
Bible**

Format 2nd Priority