



Bible Access List

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

Comoros

Bible Restrictions Rank: **13**
EXTREME ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **74**
Bible needs estimate is less than ten thousand



An Overview of Bible access in Comoros

Comoros, a small island nation in the Indian Ocean, has a population nearing 870,000. Christians account for less than 1% of this population, around 5,500 believers. Yet even within this small community, access to the Bible is extraordinarily difficult due to extreme restrictions—with estimates showing that only less than half of believers have their hands on Scripture.

The government enforces some of the harshest restrictions on Bible access in the world. Under a legal system influenced by Sharia law, importing, printing, storing, or distributing Bibles is explicitly prohibited. Possession of a Bible, especially by locals, can result in arrest, fines, or imprisonment. Even personal copies brought by citizens returning from abroad are often confiscated at the border. Only expatriates are legally allowed to possess a personal copy, and even they risk deportation if caught engaging in Bible studies or Christian gatherings beyond the three officially sanctioned church buildings.

These legal restrictions are compounded by deeply ingrained societal hostility. Muslim Background believers or MBBs face severe consequences from both family and community, ranging from isolation and harassment to threats of violence or forced divorce. In many households, a Bible found in the possession of a family member is immediately removed or destroyed. This persecution is not merely social but codified into national law, making any attempt at distributing Scripture a serious risk.

Although electricity reaches nearly 90% of the population, internet penetration remains low, with less than one-third of the population having access to the web. This severely limits the reach of digital Bibles and Christian resources online. But even when technical access exists, the fear of surveillance, community backlash, and legal penalties keeps many from using online Christian materials. In a country where non-Sunni religious expressions are seen as a threat to social cohesion, even a quiet act of faith like reading the Bible can carry enormous personal risk.

Poverty further deepens the challenge. Nearly 40% of the population lives below the poverty line, and even if Bibles were legally accessible, the financial burden would remain a serious barrier for many. In a place where basic needs take priority and religious freedom is tightly controlled, the Bible remains out of reach for nearly most Comorian Christians.

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

How can I pray for Comoros?

- **For Strength and Protection.** Pray for the Christian community in Comoros, that God may fortify their faith and shield them from harm amidst challenging circumstances. Ask for divine intervention to safeguard their right to worship and access scriptures.
- **For Creative Solutions to Bible Access.** Intercede for innovative avenues and strategies to fulfill the Scripture needs within Comoros. Pray that God opens doors, perhaps through digital platforms or discreet physical distributions, to allow His Word to reach believers and strengthen their connection with Him.
- **For Wisdom for Christian Foreigners.** Lift up in prayer the expatriates and Christian foreigners in Comoros, that they may be beacons of God's light. Pray for wisdom and discernment in finding ways to discreetly share the Gospel and distribute Bibles.
- **For Change in Government.** Let's pray for advocacy efforts to bear fruit in creating a more favorable environment for religious freedom in Comoros. Pray for a softening of hearts among the nation's leaders and for a lifting of restrictions on Bible access, enabling the Word of God to flow freely and transform lives across the islands.

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

Bible Access Restrictions

Considerable Access Restrictions

- No Importing
- No Printing
- No Storage
- No Ownership
- No distribution

Other Limiting Factors

Severe Other Factors

- Very poor
- Poor internet access
- Extremely poor infrastructure
- 50-70% literacy

Bible Shortages Among Believers

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

Main religion: Islam

Country population: 868,000

Christian population:

5,500, 0.63% of total population

World Watch List: #42

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN COMOROS?

A Legal Roadblock Against Scripture

In Comoros, Bible access is not hindered by war or natural disaster; it is blocked by the law itself. The country's constitution declares Islam the state religion, and any attempt to spread a religion other than Sunni Islam is criminalized.

Public preaching, proselytizing, or even possessing Christian materials can result in imprisonment or fines. Only expatriate Christians are legally permitted to meet for worship; and only in the three officially recognized church buildings in Moroni, Mutsamudu, and Moheli. Even these gatherings are closely monitored and tightly restricted.

The Daily Risks for Christians and MBBs

For MBBs, owning a Bible—or even reading it privately—can be very risky. MBBs are often forced to practice their faith in secret, facing pressure not only from the authorities but from their own families and communities. They can be shunned, denied inheritance, or forced into hiding.

In extreme cases, Christian women have faced house arrest or forced marriages to Muslims. Social ostracization is common, especially on the islands of Anjouan and Moheli, where radical Islamic groups known as djaulas exert strong influence.



Living in Constant Fear

Even outside the legal system, fear is a constant companion. Christians, particularly MBBs, are monitored, reported to police, and harassed for signs of religious deviation. Public identification as a Christian can cost a person their job, education, or access to basic services. For families, this can mean choosing between raising their children in the Christian faith or subjecting them to community backlash and legal penalties.

Infrastructure and Economic Obstacles

With only 27% internet penetration across the country, access to digital Bibles is limited for most Comorians. Rural areas are especially disconnected, and ongoing poverty, affecting nearly 40% of the population, means that even printed Bibles are beyond financial reach for many.

Comoros remains one of the poorest countries in the region, with weak infrastructure, high unemployment, and a heavy reliance on foreign aid, including influence from conservative Islamic nations that shape local policies.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Comoros

Comoros	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 ↓	Strong	Not at all	Not at all	Weak	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Medium	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									

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

In Comoros, two major persecution forces operate simultaneously to restrict Bible access: **Islamic oppression** and **dictatorial paranoia**. These forces are fueled by a combination of radical Muslim religious leaders, government officials, local communities, and even extended family members.

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 Comoros?

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.



Social Rejection and Legal Suppression

Islamic oppression in Comoros has deepened since a constitutional amendment in 2009 officially established Sunni Islam as the state religion. This legal framework paved the way for increased intolerance towards Christians and other religious minorities. In particular, the islands of Anjouan and Moheli have seen a rise in radical Islamic sentiments, driven in part by the influence of ultra-conservative Muslim scholars known locally as *djaulas*, many of whom were trained in Pakistan.

These *djaulas* regularly preach against Christianity and encourage harassment of MBBs. MBBs are often shunned by their families and communities, with many denied access to communal resources or subjected to public ridicule and intimidation. Christians cannot publicly display their faith, pray, or read the Bible openly without risk. Even written or digital expressions of faith can be misinterpreted as proselytizing, which is punishable by imprisonment of up to one year and fines of up to 500,000 Comorian francs.

In 2024 alone, at least two churches were attacked and damaged by youth mobs who viewed Christianity as contrary to national and religious identity. In addition, 10 Christians, mostly women, also reported experiencing rape or sexual harassment directly linked to their faith.



State-Sanctioned Exclusion

While the government promotes Islam under the guise of national unity, it systematically marginalizes Christian expression. The administration of President Azali Assoumani has imposed severe legal restrictions on Christian activity. Public preaching, evangelism, and the gathering of local Christians are strictly prohibited outside of three designated church buildings—reserved only for expatriates in Moroni, Mutsamudu, and Moheli.

Government officials explicitly deny recognition of Christian conversions. Christians cannot obtain certificates to formally acknowledge their faith, nor can they celebrate Christian weddings or baptisms without risk. Christian NGOs also face operational hurdles, including denial of registration and surveillance under suspicion of proselytizing. The state maintains that all Comorians are Muslim by default, leaving no room in the national registry or administrative system for any other faith.

Together, these engines foster an atmosphere where Bible access is not just discouraged—it is actively obstructed. Whether through community hostility or governmental control, Christians in Comoros face relentless pressure that makes owning, reading, or distributing Scripture an act of courage and risk.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN COMOROS

In a country where Christians represent less than 1% of the population, a number estimated less than **10,000 Bibles** can make a huge difference to spark growth. For a persecuted and isolated minority, Scripture is not just a spiritual resource; it is a lifeline of truth, strength, and courage in the face of daily opposition.

A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

Despite the oppressive climate, the Church in Comoros is quietly growing. While still a small number, this growth signals both a spiritual hunger and an urgent need to supply the expanding community of believers with access to God's Word.

As more Comorians seek Christ in secret, their spiritual formation hinges on having the Bible in a format they can safely access and understand.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

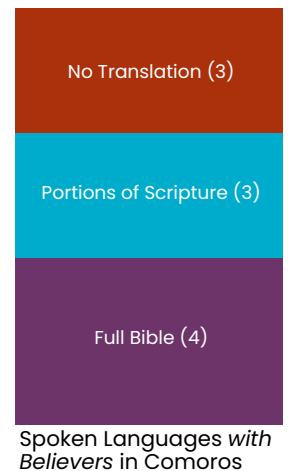
Given the country's unique access situation, the most effective format for Scripture in Comoros is the Bible app distributed through devices. It offers discreet, portable access for believers, seekers, and MBBs alike. Targeted distribution efforts can help bridge the gap faster compared to print and other formats.

The Translation Gap

However, translation barriers still persist. Of the 11 languages spoken by Christians in Comoros:

- Only **4** have the full translation of the Bible.
- **3** have only portions translated.
- And **3 languages remain without any Scripture translation at all**

This translation gap leaves entire people groups unreached, unable to read or hear God's Word in their heart language. Bridging this gap is essential not just for discipleship but for the very survival of Christianity in Comoros



THE CLARION CALL

The call to action for Comoros is not about filling pews; it's about fueling faith under fire. Every Bible delivered is a declaration that Christians in Comoros are not forgotten. They are part of the Body, and we must act with urgency, compassion, and boldness.

Let us rise to this moment with prayer, determination, and generosity. By prioritizing Bible App development, accelerating translation projects, and equipping believers in safe and sustainable ways, we can answer the silent cries of the Church in Comoros.

Now is the time to stand with them—so that every believer, no matter how hidden or persecuted, has access to the eternal hope found only in Scripture.

