



Bible Access List

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

Kazakhstan

Bible Restrictions Rank: **27**
SEVERE ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **44**
Bible needs estimate between fifty and one hundred thousand



An Overview of Bible access in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan, a nation of nearly 20 million people, is home to an estimated 5 million Christians, which is about a quarter of the total population. However, despite this sizable Christian presence, Bible access remains severely limited due to severe restrictions. Only around half of all Christians are believed to have access to Scripture, and for many, even that comes with barriers ranging from bureaucratic to outright dangerous. This highlights a critical and growing need for Bibles across the nation.

Bible access in Kazakhstan is deeply shaped by its restrictive religious laws and tight government control. While it is technically legal for individuals to own a Bible, the import, printing, distribution, and sale of Bibles are subject to heavy state regulation and require government approval. Only registered churches, most notably the Russian Orthodox Church, is able to navigate this system with relative ease. But for other groups, including Protestant churches, evangelicals, and especially unregistered house churches, the process is complex, often blocked, and in many cases, impossible.

Access is also complicated by socio-political and religious dynamics. Christianity in Kazakhstan is often viewed as a foreign religion, and the state prioritizes support for groups it deems "traditional," such as the Russian Orthodox Church and Sunni Islam. All other groups are labeled "non-traditional," making their religious activities more scrutinized or suppressed.

Yet despite these severe restrictions, Kazakhstan's modern infrastructure opens a unique door for digital outreach. With over 93% of the population using the internet and nearly universal literacy, digital Bible formats offer one of the most strategic ways forward. However, even here, challenges persist: digital activity is monitored, religious websites are blocked, and online Bible access is limited by state censorship.

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

How can I pray for Kazakhstan?

- **Favor with the Government.** Pray that the government will grant the church greater freedom, allowing the Bible to circulate beyond the Russian Orthodox Church. Ask for softened hearts among officials who currently restrict Scripture distribution.
- **Bible Production Opportunities.** Pray for more opportunities to produce, print, and distribute Bibles, especially for believers outside state-approved groups. Ask for boldness and protection for those leading such efforts.
- **Global Partnerships and Innovation.** Pray for strategic partnerships that can develop creative, secure ways to get Bibles—especially digital and audio formats—into the hands of believers despite censorship and surveillance.

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

Bible Access Restrictions

Considerable Access Restrictions

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

Other Limiting Factors

Some Other Factors

- Poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated** Bible need is between 50 and 100 thousand

Main religion: Islam

Country population: 19,828,000

Christian population:

- 25.4% 5,031,000, 25.37% of total population

World Watch List: #38

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN KAZAKHSTAN?

A System of Control Masquerading as Religious Freedom

Although Kazakhstan's constitution promises religious liberty, the reality is a tightly controlled religious environment shaped by authoritarian laws and systemic surveillance. The root of these challenges traces back to the 2011 Religion Law, which effectively bans unregistered religious activity.

All religious communities are required to undergo a burdensome re-registration process, with some groups denied registration altogether. Any Christian activity, such as gathering for worship, distributing Bibles, or even possessing religious literature, must be sanctioned by the state or risk fines, arrests, or church raids.

State Censorship and Bible Restrictions

Censorship laws mandate that all religious materials, print or digital, must be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Information (MCI) before distribution. Even registered churches face restrictions when importing or printing Bibles.

Violations have resulted in confiscations, fines, and even court-ordered destruction of religious texts. The legal framework extends to online platforms, with many Christians fined for posting or distributing Bible verses and other content without permission.

Muslim Background Believers or MBBs Under Pressure

MBBs face particularly harsh treatment. Many are pressured by family, community, and even local religious leaders to recant their faith. Some MBBs have been beaten, locked in their homes, or expelled from their communities.

In rural areas, where Islamic identity is closely tied to national identity, the discovery of a Bible in a MBB's possession can trigger harassment or physical violence.

Discrimination in Daily Life

Bible access is also hindered by systemic discrimination. Christian families, especially those from non-traditional denominations, report being blocked from adopting children, pressured to send their children to Islamic instruction, and even denied jobs. Children of Christian parents have been harassed in schools, and Christians have been fined for holding unsanctioned Bible studies or prayer gatherings.

Fear and Surveillance Stifle Access

Even where Bibles are technically allowed, fear remains a major barrier. Government surveillance is widespread, with reports of phone tapping, online monitoring, and church services being secretly recorded.

Many believers, especially MBBs, keep their faith secret out of fear of retaliation from both the state and their own families.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan	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 ↓	Medium	Not at all	Not at all	Medium	Weak	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 Kazakhstan, multiple forces of persecution operate simultaneously to restrict Bible access, including **dictatorial paranoia**, **Islamic oppression**, and **clan oppression**. These are fueled by government officials, Muslim religious leaders, ethnic group leaders, and even extended family and ordinary citizens. Each plays a role in creating an environment of fear, censorship, and religious hostility that directly affects access to Scripture.

The World Watch List by 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 Kazakhstan?

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.



Government Control Over All Religious Expression

The government tightly controls all religious activity that falls outside of state-approved organizations. Churches not registered with the government are illegal and frequently targeted. In 2024 alone, unregistered Baptist communities in the Shu District were raided by police, resulting in at least six summary fines and the legal pursuit of elderly pastors, including a 76-year-old who was awaiting a court hearing despite his poor health.

Every single piece of Christian literature is subject to state censorship. Any Bible or religious material imported or printed without official approval is prohibited. Christian organizations must go through a slow and uncertain bureaucratic process just to legally distribute Bibles, and even then, permission is not guaranteed. This forces many churches to operate underground, especially those engaging in evangelism, greatly limiting both the storage and distribution of Bibles.

Surveillance and monitoring are common across Kazakhstan. Christian churches, especially those unregistered, are frequently observed by local officials. Sunday services have been reported to be filmed during by government agents, under the guise of "monitoring" rather than "spying". These measures create a climate of fear that discourages believers from distributing or even possessing Bibles, especially digital or printed materials that could be confiscated or used as evidence of illegal religious activity.



Blended Islamic and Clan Oppression: MBBs Face Brutal Social Repercussions

While the constitution guarantees religious freedom, in practice, ethnic Kazakh MBBs experience severe pressure from family, friends, and the broader community. Islamic Oppression in Kazakhstan is deeply entangled with clan oppression, especially in rural areas. MBBs often face physical abuse, are locked in their homes by family members, or are expelled from their villages. In some reported cases, local imams have openly preached against them, legitimizing further social ostracization.



In 2024, at least 19 MBBs were harassed by their Muslim relatives and communities, and at least 19 Christians were forced to flee their homes. There were also reports of forced marriages involving 20 women from central Kazakhstan who were pressured into marrying Muslim men. Such pressure makes it nearly impossible for MBBs to openly access or distribute Bibles. For many, Scripture must be hidden or accessed secretly, if at all.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN KAZAKHSTAN

Against the backdrop of increasing surveillance, social hostility, and legal restrictions, Bible access in Kazakhstan remains a pressing concern. To adequately support believers across the country, **up to 100,000 Bibles** are needed to bridge the gap. This will make a huge difference in evangelism and discipleship efforts.

A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

Despite external pressures, the Church in Kazakhstan has experienced some growth over the past five years. While modest, this expansion indicates a hunger for the Gospel. It also signals a growing challenge: to supply enough Bibles to match this spiritual momentum. Without timely intervention, the church's ability to disciple new believers and sustain faith communities will be significantly hindered.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

Given Kazakhstan's widespread internet coverage, **audio and video Bibles** are proving to be the most effective and accessible formats, especially for believers in secret or those hesitant to carry printed Scripture. Audio is a top priority, followed by visual resources such as Bible videos and digital tools.

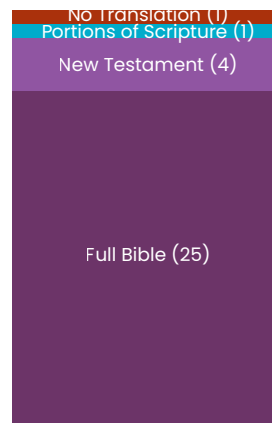
Still, printed Bibles remain essential for older Christians, rural congregations, and those without safe digital access.

The Translation Gap

Kazakhstan's Christians speak at least 31 different languages. Of these languages:

- Only **25** languages currently have a full Bible translation.
- **4** more have only the New Testament.
- **1** has partial Scripture translated.
- **1 language has no Scripture available at all**

This leaves thousands without access to the Word of God in their heart language. These translation gaps must be addressed to ensure the Gospel reaches every community in a way that is both understandable and deeply personal.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Kazakhstan

THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Kazakhstan is not just about numbers, but real people in need. Behind each missing Bible is a believer seeking hope, encouragement, and truth.

This is a call for the global Church to respond. Through strategic Bible distribution, translation efforts, and digital engagement, we can bring Scripture to the hands and hearts of Kazakhstan's believers.

By acting now, we help ensure that every follower of Jesus in Kazakhstan—whether in the cities or the steppe, online, or underground—has access to the life-changing power of God's Word.



0.7%

Annual Church
Growth



Bibles needed for both
**Believers
& Seekers**



50-100k

Bible needs estimate



**Audio
Bible**

Preferred Format



**Video
Bible**

Format 2nd Priority