



Bible Access List

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

Mexico

Bible Restrictions Rank: **74**
MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible shortage has been confirmed



An Overview of Bible Access in Mexico

In Mexico, nearly 95% of the population identifies as Christian. But despite this widespread Christian representation, the actual access to the Bible is far from universal. It's estimated that less than half of the believers lack personal access to Scripture. This means that millions, especially among the poor, the rural, and the marginalized. For a nation steeped in religious identity, this presents a critical gap that needs to be addressed.

While Mexico broadly permits the printing, owning, and distribution of Bibles, there are sharp exceptions, especially within its indigenous communities. In these regions, local customary law often overrides national protections. Christians in these communities, particularly Evangelicals and other "non-accepted" church groups, face local prohibitions that ban the storage, possession, and distribution of Bibles. These rules are enforced by ethnic leaders and religious authorities who view outside Christian influence as a threat to their ancestral traditions.

Indigenous opposition is compounded by broader instability. Criminal groups have an active presence in a significant portion of the country. In some regions, particularly rural or underserved areas, they often operate with impunity. Church leaders who speak out against violence and corruption can provoke retaliation.

Adding to these layers of restriction is the rise of secular intolerance. Radical pressure groups and some government authorities have begun opposing Christian expression in public life, especially around issues like marriage, sexuality, and family. Churches have been vandalized during public protests, and faith-based views have become targets of legal action. In this increasingly polarized environment, many Christians resort to self-censorship, limiting their ability to share Scripture openly.

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

How can I pray for Mexico?

- **Provision and Resources.** Lift up prayers for the significant Bible shortage facing the vast Christian community in Mexico. Pray for the resources and means to swiftly and effectively address this gap, ensuring every believer has access to their own copy of the Bible.
- **Global Partnerships and Unity.** Ask for the establishment of global partnerships and collaborations that can navigate the unique challenges of Bible distribution in Mexico. Pray for unity among organizations and local churches to creatively overcome barriers and extend the reach of Scripture to every corner of the nation.
- **Peace and Transformation.** Intercede for Mexico in its battle against drug cartels and criminal organizations. Pray for peace across the land and a transformation of hearts within these groups, leading to safer environments for spreading the Gospel and distributing Bibles without fear of violence or persecution.

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

Bible Access Restrictions

Minimal Access Restrictions

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

Other Limiting Factors

Some Other Factors

- Poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bibles are needed for believers and seekers
- Impacted by armed conflicts

Main religion: Christianity

Country population: 129,388,000

Christian population:

123,265,000, 95.27% of total population

World Watch List: #31

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN MEXICO?

Despite a Christian majority population, Bible access in Mexico faces formidable roadblocks rooted in three interlocking challenges: organized crime, indigenous customs, and increasing secular intolerance.

The Daily Threat of Organized Crime

Organized crime poses one of the most severe threats to Bible access across the country. Criminal cartels exert their influence and are active across most areas in of Mexico. As examples, church leaders who denounce corruption or encourage communities to resist criminal influence have been harassed, abducted, and even killed. In certain hotspots, pastors are forced to seek informal permission from cartel members before holding services or traveling between towns, a grim reflection of the de facto authority these groups wield in the absence of state protection.

In 2024 alone, at least 24 Christians were killed, 116 abducted, and 193 churches attacked, many of them because of their faith-driven activities. Criminal groups have also forced churches to alter service schedules, limit gatherings, or stop activities altogether.

Indigenous Hostility Towards Non-Catholic Christians

In indigenous communities, especially in southern states like Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Hidalgo, religious freedom is severely curtailed when individuals abandon traditional or syncretistic religious practices in favor of non-Catholic forms of Christianity. Christian converts often face fines, arrests, forced evictions, or the denial of basic services.

The state's legal recognition of indigenous autonomy often results in a lack of government intervention, even in cases of clear religious discrimination. In these regions, possessing a Bible or holding a Christian gathering can trigger harsh retaliation from ethnic leaders and community members.



Secular Ideologies on the Rise

Secular intolerance represents a growing obstacle. Christians, particularly those speaking publicly on issues like marriage, life, or parental rights, are increasingly silenced or penalized under the guise of protecting secularism and non-discrimination. Vandalism of churches, legal action against outspoken Christians, and censorship of Christian values in public discourse all contribute to an environment where Christians feel pressured to self-censor.

These dynamics limit not only the freedom to speak about the Bible but also the freedom to distribute, study, or teach it, especially in educational or political contexts.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Mexico

Mexico	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 ↓	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Strong	Weak	Not at all	Medium	Very weak	Strong	
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 Mexico, there are forces of persecution that hinder Bible access. These can involve **clan oppression**, **organized corruption and crime**, **secular intolerance**, and a weaker but still significant force—**Christian denominational oppression**. These forces are driven by government officials, ethnic group leaders, non-Christian religious leaders, normal citizens, extended family, and organized crime.

Now, we can go deeper 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 Mexico?

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.



In Mexico, Bible access is heavily restricted by a deeply entrenched culture of organized crime and corruption. Criminal cartels, active in every Mexican state, operate as de facto authorities in many regions, especially in rural areas. These cartels view churches as threats when they preach against crime or discourage community involvement in illegal activities.

Church leaders and outspoken believers are frequently targeted. In one tragic case, a catechist and his family were murdered and burned in Chiapas after he encouraged his congregation to reject cartel activity.

Churches face extortion, intimidation, and surveillance. Christian buildings are vandalized or shut down, more than 120 churches were closed due to cartel violence in early 2024. The presence of Bibles or public preaching can trigger threats or physical attacks. Even Christian humanitarian work is perceived as disruptive to criminal control, making Bible-based ministry an act of real risk in cartel-dominated areas.



In Mexico's indigenous southern regions (Chiapas, Oaxaca, Puebla, and others), clan oppression is a powerful force. Ethnic leaders enforce ancestral or syncretistic religious practices, often rooted in Catholicism but fused with indigenous beliefs. Converts who reject these customs to follow Christ face fines, beatings, imprisonment, or forced displacement. Owning a Bible, holding church gatherings, or even expressing faith on social media can result in violent retaliation.

Government officials, citing respect for indigenous autonomy, frequently fail to intervene, allowing religious persecution to go unpunished. For example, four Christians were arrested and threatened with eviction in San Juan la Lana in 2023 for refusing to participate in community religious practices. Without government protection, these communities often deny Christians the right to possess Bibles, meet for worship, or teach their children their faith.



Another growing barrier to Bible access in Mexico is secular intolerance. Ideological pressure groups and some political parties seek to silence Christian voices in public spaces, particularly those that affirm traditional values around marriage, life, and family. Churches have been vandalized during feminist protests, and Christian leaders who speak out are often monitored, threatened, or legally punished.

Public faith-based expressions, including the distribution of Christian literature or public reading of Scripture, face increasing restrictions. A notable example is the legal case against former Congressman Rodrigo Iván Cortés, convicted of "gender-based political violence" for expressing biblical views on social media. This chilling environment fosters self-censorship, even within churches, and discourages the open sharing or gifting of Bibles.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN MEXICO

Despite Mexico's majority-Christian identity, Bible ownership remains surprisingly low. Research estimates show that less than 50% of Mexico's Christian population have access to God's Word. With over 120 million Christians in the country, a significant number of Bibles will be required to meet the needs of believers and seekers.

A Declining Church in Need of God's Word

This urgency is compounded by a concerning trend: the Christian population in Mexico has experienced a decline over the past five years. In a climate where faith is waning, and social hostility is rising, the role of God's Word in strengthening and sustaining believers becomes even more critical. Without Scripture, churches cannot disciple effectively, and individuals lack the spiritual growth needed to persevere under pressure from organized crime, community rejection, and ideological hostility.

Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

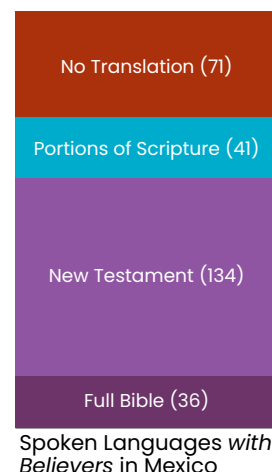
When it comes to Bible formats, **print remains the top priority**, particularly for isolated and indigenous communities. **Audio Bibles and Scripture accessed through the internet** serve as an important supplementary role, especially for those with limited literacy or digital access.

The Translation Gap

However, significant language gaps remain. Christians speak at least 282 languages in Mexico. Of these languages:

- Only **36** have a full Bible translation
- Another **134** have only the New Testament
- **41** have just portions of Scripture translated
- **71 languages still need** any part of the Bible to be translated

The implications are staggering: nearly one in four languages spoken by Christians in Mexico has zero biblical content available. These are not just numbers. They represent entire communities left without a lifeline of hope, guidance, and truth.



THE CLARION CALL

The Church in Mexico stands in the crossfire of escalating violence, deepening secularism, and ethnic intolerance. The Bible is not just a religious text; it's a source of hope for pastors who risk their lives, for parents raising their children in faith amidst cultural rejection, and for new believers breaking free from criminal or highly religious backgrounds.

Now is the time for the global Church to respond. To rise with urgency. To flood Mexico with the Word of God—through printed Bibles, translated texts, audio resources, and digital tools. Every Bible placed is a seed of transformation, a shield of truth, and a light in the growing darkness.

Let us not wait until the flame flickers out. The need is now. The opportunity is here. It's time to act.

