



# Bible Access List

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

# Niger

Bible Restrictions Rank: **23**  
**SEVERE ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

Bible Shortage Rank: **57**  
**Bible needs estimate between ten and twenty five thousand**



## An Overview of Bible access in Niger

In the vast, arid expanse of West Africa, Niger is home to an overwhelmingly Muslim population, with Christians representing a tiny minority—far from even just 1% of the nation’s 28 million people. This translates to an estimated below 70,000 Christians, of whom only about a third are believed to have access to a Bible due to severe restrictions.

Although there are no official bans on Bible ownership, severe practical and security restrictions make access to Scripture extremely difficult. High import fees, constraints on printing and distribution, and limited legal recognition for churches all contribute to make access challenging. The situation is further compounded in regions like Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Diffa—areas plagued by Islamic extremist groups including IS Sahel, JNIM and Boko Haram —where owning, printing or distribution of Bibles or attending a church service can be life-threatening. These regions account for over 40% of Niger’s population and more than half of its Christian community.

Poverty remains a critical barrier to Bible access. Niger is one of the poorest nations in the world, with over 50% of the population living in extreme poverty. Infrastructure is severely lacking—with just a fifth of the nation powered by electricity, and internet penetration even lower than that.

The recent military coup further destabilized the country, disrupting aid and prompting deeper insecurity. Coupled with Niger’s increasing alignment with Russia and the growing reach of transnational trafficking networks, the geopolitical fallout has empowered jihadist factions to expand their control, further impeding access to Bibles as a result.

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

### How can I pray for Niger?

- **Protection and Open Access.** Let’s pray that God protects every believer in Niger, especially those under direct threat, especially Muslim Background Believers, and makes a way for them to receive and hold onto His Word in safety.
- **Peace and End of Violence.** Ask for God’s intervention in the spread of extremism. May He disrupt the plans of jihadist groups and usher in peace where terror now reigns.
- **Global Partnerships and Support.** Pray for creative global strategies—using print, audio, and discreet digital tools—to get Bibles into every believer’s hands. May God raise up partners willing to go the extra mile for the hidden church in Niger.

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

### Bible Access Restrictions

#### Minimal Access Restrictions

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

### Other Limiting Factors

#### Extreme Other Factors

- Extremely Poor
- Very poor internet access
- Poor infrastructure
- <50% of population access to electricity
- <50% literacy

### Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is very low, **estimated** Bible need is between 10 and 25 thousand
- Impacted by armed conflicts

**Main religion:** Islam

**Country population:** 28,239,000

**Christian population:**

69,200, 0.25% of total population

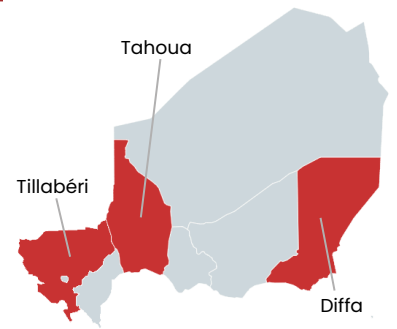
**World Watch List:** #28

# WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN NIGER?

Bible access in Niger is blocked by a combination of escalating violence, social hostility, political instability, and practical limitations tied to poverty and infrastructure.

## Violent Extremism in Key Regions

In regions bordering Nigeria and Mali—such as Diffa, Tillabéri, and Tahoua—Christian communities face violent attacks from jihadist groups like Boko Haram, IS Sahel, and JNIM. These groups have destroyed churches, abducted believers, and displaced entire communities, forcing many Christians into hiding or internal displacement camps. Over 100 churches and Christian properties, including schools and hospitals, were attacked in the last year alone. Such violence not only deprives communities of places to worship but cut off entire regions from Scripture access.



## Daily Risks for Christians and Muslim Background Believers

Even outside conflict zones, everyday life for Christians is marked by intense pressure and discrimination. Muslim Background Believers or MBBs are particularly targeted—often rejected by their families, denied inheritance, and threatened into abandoning their faith. In some areas, possessing Christian materials, organizing gatherings, or simply displaying a cross can lead to harassment, assault, or worse.

## Poverty and Infrastructure Challenges

Beyond persecution, Niger's deep poverty and lack of infrastructure pose significant barriers. With an internet penetration rate of below 20% and literacy significantly below half of the population, both digital and written Bibles are out of reach for many.

Discriminatory social structures also hinder Christians from accessing community resources like clean water, education, and government services, further marginalizing believers in need of Scripture.

## Post-Coup Instability and Rising Jihadism

The July 2023 coup added another layer of uncertainty, weakening governance and allowing jihadist and criminal groups to expand their influence, especially in already volatile regions. As the country realigns its political alliances and navigates economic sanctions, the space for safe, legal, and practical Bible access continues to shrink.

# Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Niger

Niger	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
<b>Persecution Engines →</b>										<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>
<b>Persecution Drivers ↓</b>	Very strong	Not at all	Not at all	Medium	Very weak	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	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 Niger, multiple forces of persecution operate simultaneously to restrict Bible access, including **Islamic Oppression, Clan Oppression,** and **Organized Corruption and Crime.** These engines are fueled by violent religious groups, non-Christian religious leaders, ethnic group leaders, and even one's own family and local government officials.

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 Niger?

## 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.



### Jihadist Violence and Religious Conformity Drive Bible Scarcity

In Niger, Islamic oppression exerts the most intense pressure on Christian communities, especially in the regions bordering Nigeria and Mali. The religious identity of being Muslim is deeply ingrained in national and ethnic identity, leaving little tolerance for deviation. Muslim Background Believers are often viewed as traitors not only to their faith but also to their community. Families may forcibly disown them, subject them to beatings, or drive them out of their homes. Many faced severe social ostracism, with some even losing custody of their children or inheritance rights after conversion.

This hostility intensifies in areas under the control or influence of violent Islamic groups like Boko Haram, IS Sahel, and JNIM militants. These groups target churches, Christian schools, and healthcare facilities. Recently, over 100 churches and Christian-owned institutions were attacked, looted, or destroyed, particularly in the Diffa and Tillabéri regions. One such deadly incident occurred in the Banibangou community in Tillabéri in February 2023, where a military convoy was ambushed by suspected jihadists, resulting in the deaths of 17 soldiers and injuries to 13 others. This attack ended a period of relative calm and signaled renewed instability.

In these high-risk zones, even possessing a Bible can invite violent retaliation. Jihadist groups enforce a de facto ban on Christian materials. Christians often hide their faith, and in many regions, openly possessing Christian materials could expose them to attack, arrest, or forced displacement. In Tillabéri and Diffa, pastors and church leaders have been forced to flee to Niamey and other safer cities to escape imminent threats.

Additionally, extremist ideologies are being propagated non-violently through madrassas and local mosques. Groups like Izala and the Sufi-influenced Tariqa exert religious pressure, especially in cities such as Maradi and Niamey. Radical preachers have used mass media, radio and television, to spread anti-Christian rhetoric. In areas like Tunga, Dosso region, local religious and tribal leaders have completely barred Christian presence, with zero tolerance for churches, Bibles, or evangelism.



### **Ethnic Allegiance as a Gatekeeper to Faith**

Clan oppression in Niger manifests in the form of rigid ethnic and communal loyalty that often equates religion with cultural identity. Especially in rural communities, conversion to Christianity is considered a betrayal not just of faith but of family, tribe, and tradition. This pressure is especially severe among the Fulani, Hausa, and Zarma ethnic groups, who dominate both political and social structures in the country.

In these communities, local ethnic leaders exert powerful influence, often acting as both cultural and religious gatekeepers. Their control extends to whether someone can build a church, hold meetings, or distribute Bibles. One documented example is in the village of Tunga in Dosso state, where religious and ethnic leaders enforce a zero-tolerance policy toward Christianity—no Christians are allowed to settle or worship there. Muslim Background Believers are expelled, and any attempts to distribute Bibles or hold prayer gatherings are immediately shut down.

Clan-based rejection also leads to exclusion from communal resources. In several rural areas, Christians are denied access to clean drinking water or prevented from participating in local markets. Pressure from clan elders often includes forced marriage of Christian women to Muslim men, serving both as punishment and a means to forcibly reintegrate them into the dominant religion. These actions not only isolate Christians but effectively cut off all avenues for receiving, storing, or sharing Scripture within those communities.



## A Shadow Network Blocking the Spread of Scripture

The presence of entrenched corruption and criminal networks further compounds the crisis of Bible access in Niger. Despite the former government's anti-corruption initiatives, bribery and impunity remain widespread, especially within the judiciary. This creates an environment where Christian communities are unable to secure legal recognition for churches, obtain distribution permits, or defend themselves when their property is attacked.

The overlap between organized crime and jihadist operations has devastating consequences for Christians. Criminal syndicates traffic weapons, drugs, and people across Niger's porous borders, with profits fueling further violence. In regions where government oversight is weak, such as Diffa, Tillabéri, and parts of Tahoua, these networks operate with near-total impunity. Christian villages are routinely attacked, and homes and businesses looted or burned down. In 2024, over 1,000 Christian homes were reported attacked or destroyed, forcing an equal number to flee or go into hiding.

Moreover, some government officials, either due to ideological sympathy or bribery, turn a blind eye to these operations. This breakdown of governance makes it nearly impossible for churches to transport Bibles across regions without risking seizure or harassment. In some areas, church-run schools have been forced to close or teach Quranic content under pressure from armed actors, stripping Christian communities of educational and discipleship resources.

# THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN NIGER

Against the backdrop of persecution, poverty, and deepening instability, Bible access in Niger remains critically low. If 1 out of 3 of supposedly 70,000 Christians have access, then this points to a significant gap in one of the most vulnerable regions of West Africa. An estimated number of **up to 25,000 Bibles** can already make a huge difference to support the Christ-believing population as it currently stands

## A Church Slowly Growing, Needing More of God's Word

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The urgency is heightened by the growth of the church in Niger. Despite harsh conditions, the Christian population has modestly increased over the past five years. It demands renewed efforts to equip both new and long-standing Christians with the Word of God to strengthen faith, discipleship, and outreach.

## A Church not Growing, Needing More of God's Word

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The urgency is heightened by the lack of growth of the church in Niger. With the harsh conditions, the Christian population has not expanded over the past five years. It demands renewed efforts to equip both new and long-standing Christians with the Word of God to strengthen faith, discipleship, and outreach

# Bible Formats for Unique Needs

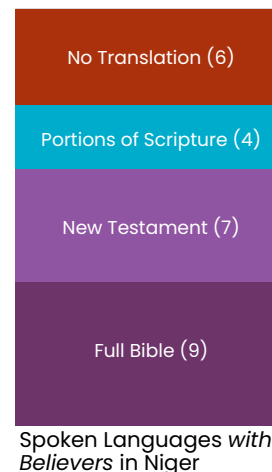
In Niger, **print Bibles remain the top priority**, especially in rural areas where illiteracy and poor infrastructure make digital options nearly inaccessible. **Audio Bibles** are also crucial, given that more than half of the population are illiterate and many communities live without electricity or internet access. While mobile phone adoption is rising, internet penetration is still below 20%, and only a small minority use social media, making digital Bibles a limited solution for the majority.

## The Translation Gap

Another major barrier to Bible access is language. Niger’s Christians speak at least 26 different languages. Of these languages:

- Only **9** of those have a full Bible translation
- **7** languages have only the New Testament
- **4** have just portions of Scripture translated
- **6 languages still have no Bible translation at all**

This leaves entire communities without access to Scripture in their heart language. Thousands remain disconnected from the transformative message of the Gospel.



## THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Niger is not just about closing a supply gap. It is about responding to a cry for hope. Every Bible represents a chance for light to shine in darkness, for truth to break through fear, and for discipleship to flourish even in the hardest places. But the road ahead is not easy. With jihadist violence rising, poverty deepening, and whole regions cut off from Christian fellowship, bold action is needed.

This is a call for the global church to stand with believers in Niger. To invest in print and audio Bible distribution, to accelerate translation work, and to pray fervently for protection and revival.

In a land marked by pressure and persecution, we must rise to meet the spiritual crisis with the Word of God. The time is now.

