



Bible Access List

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

Nicaragua

Bible Restrictions Rank: **70**
MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **30**
Bible needs estimate between two hundred fifty and five hundred thousand



An Overview of Bible Access in Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, the Christian faith stretches across nearly the entire population. With a population nearing 7.2 million, roughly 95% identify as believers in Christ. Yet, despite this near-universal Christian representation, estimates still reveal that only around a third of Nicaraguan believers actually have access to a Bible. This signals a major gap as millions of Christians are living without personal access to the Word of God.

On paper, Bible access in Nicaragua faces only minimal legal restrictions. Bibles can be imported, printed, stored, and distributed; but these actions require government permits, and obtaining those permits is often a complex, slow, and bureaucratic process. While official barriers may be low, the practical reality on the ground is more difficult.

In recent years, under the Ortega regime, the government has tightened its grip on civil society, targeting churches and Christian organizations with increasing hostility. Although Bibles themselves are not directly banned, the broader climate of repression, legal harassment, and suspicion surrounding religious activities indirectly limits their availability, especially when it comes to printing or large-scale importation efforts. Surveillance, red tape, and intimidation have become the new norm.

Despite these obstacles, distribution is possible but with some caveats. Local churches, the Bible Society of Nicaragua, and international organizations continue to find ways to get God's Word into people's hands—often at a low cost and sometimes free of charge. These efforts persist even amid government interference and a broader crackdown on civil society. However, many ministries report limited resources to print locally, and disruptions to international partnerships due to new laws instituted back in 2020.

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

How can I pray for Nicaragua?

- **Open Access.** Pray for the Christian community in Nicaragua—that despite the bureaucratic obstacles and surveillance, believers will find creative and courageous ways to access the Word of God and share it with others.
- **Global Partnerships.** Ask God to raise up global partners with wisdom and discernment to support the Nicaraguan Church—navigating red tape, censorship, and risk while continuing to provide the Bible in every format needed.
- **Border Opening for Bibles.** Lift up prayers for a change in governmental policies—specifically for favor and clarity in importation processes, so that Bibles can enter freely and reach every household that longs for the truth of Scripture.

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

Bible Access Restrictions

Minimal Access Restrictions

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

Other Limiting Factors

Considerable Other Factors

- Poor
- Extremely poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers

Bible ownership is low, **estimated Bible need** is between 250 and 500 thousand

Main religion: Christianity

Country population: 7,143,000

Christian population:

6,775,000, 94.85% of total population

World Watch List: #30

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN NICARAGUA?

A Climate of Repression Against Christian Leaders

Despite having one of the highest percentages of Christians in Latin America, Bible access in Nicaragua is under pressure due to systemic government repression. The Ortega regime's authoritarian consolidation of power has created an atmosphere where churches, pastors, and Christian organizations are viewed as threats to national stability. As a result, Bible distribution efforts, especially those aligned with independent churches or external donors, face legal and bureaucratic roadblocks.

Christian leaders, particularly from the Catholic Church, have endured arbitrary arrests, forced exile, and the stripping of nationality. Furthermore, Christian ministries that operate outside of regime control are at risk. Hundreds of other churches, especially evangelical ones, have had their legal status canceled, limiting their ability to import or distribute Bibles and other resources.

Worship Restrictions and Surveillance

Meanwhile, government censorship and police surveillance have severely limited public worship and outreach. Public Christian processions during Holy Week were banned for the second year in a row, and authorities surrounded churches to prevent gatherings. Zoom calls and prayer meetings are monitored, and digital communication on religious topics may be flagged under the country's 2020 Cybercrime Law. This has created a climate of fear where even sharing Bible verses online can invite investigation or arrest.

Shutting Down Christian Institutions

Compounding these restrictions is the cancellation of legal status for thousands of NGOs, including faith-based organizations, and the seizure of their property and assets. Churches that once provided community support, Bible studies, or aid programs have been shut down, their pastors either imprisoned or forced into exile. In some regions, seminarians aligned with the ruling party reportedly spy on internal church affairs, undermining trust and further silencing the church from within.

Economic Pressures Crippling Church Operations

Finally, economic manipulation—such as the freezing of church bank accounts and the blocking of pensions for retired priests—has severely disrupted church operations, including ministries and community services that would otherwise support the Christian community.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Nicaragua

Nicaragua	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 ↓	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Medium
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 Nicaragua, the dominant forces restricting Bible access are deeply entangled with the country's authoritarian regime. There are forces of persecution at play, which are **dictatorial paranoia**, **communist and post-communist oppression**, and **organized corruption and crime**. These are not just ideological backdrops but tangible systems of control that have directly impacted Christian communities, especially since the 2018 protests. These forces are primarily driven by government officials, paramilitary groups, and the ruling FSLN party, and have created a climate where Christians are viewed as subversive elements.

The World Watch List highlights how these forces contribute to a nationwide atmosphere of surveillance, suppression, and fear. But how does this affect Bible access specifically?

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.



Silencing the Voice of the Church

Since 2018, the government has intensified pressure on churches and believers through a calculated strategy of harassment, legal manipulation, and intimidation. Churches, particularly those that openly denounce human rights violations, are labeled as enemies of the state. As a result, Christian materials have been confiscated or censored. In some cases, believers were interrogated or penalized for possessing prayer books, rosaries, or even new editions of the Bible that mentioned persecuted leaders like this one bishop of the Catholic church.

Christian activities outside of church buildings are heavily restricted, while gatherings inside are monitored by police. Surveillance of Christian meetings makes it dangerous to organize Bible studies, prayer groups, or public religious celebrations without risking arrest or harassment.



Weaponizing Ideology Against Scripture

The Nicaraguan government, driven by a Marxist-Communist ideological framework, sees independent Christian institutions as rivals to its authority. Consequently, Christian universities, seminaries, and faith-based NGOs have been systematically shut down or had their legal statuses revoked. Over 100 evangelical churches were forcibly closed in 2024 alone. Bible distribution efforts, especially those involving foreign support, have been obstructed under accusations of "money laundering" or "foreign interference".

Religious events like Holy Week processions have been banned under the pretext of public safety, while the regime organizes its own pro-government religious activities to dilute the influence of authentic Christian traditions. Even Scripture-based public discourse is treated as a threat to "state security" and is suppressed.



Economic Strangulation of Bible Access

The Ortega regime's alliances with corrupt officials and paramilitary groups have created a system where access to Bibles is not just legally restricted but financially strangled. Bank accounts of dioceses and Christian organizations have been frozen, preventing the import, printing, and distribution of Bibles. Property seizures, fines, and arbitrary closures of churches have deprived many communities of places where Scripture could be read, shared, or taught.

Additionally, Christian-run humanitarian projects that often incorporated Bible distribution have been systematically dismantled. The seizure of assets from churches and faith-based groups has removed vital channels through which believers—especially those in rural or impoverished areas—might have otherwise received copies of the Bible.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN NICARAGUA

Despite Nicaragua's high percentage of Christians, a critical gap in Bible access persists. To meet the spiritual needs of practicing believers, estimates of up to half a million Bibles are needed.

A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

The need is even more urgent when viewed against the backdrop of church growth. Over the last five years, the Christian population has expanded despite intense government repression. But without access to Scripture, this growth remains vulnerable; believers will find it difficult to grow deep roots without the Word.

A Stable Church, A Growing Demand

The need is even more urgent when viewed against the backdrop of church growth. Over the last five years, the Christian population remained about the same size, despite intense government repression.

With pastors exiled, churches shuttered, and evangelism driven underground, the resilience of faith of believers in Nicaragua is nothing short of miraculous. But without access to Scripture, this growth remains vulnerable; believers will find it difficult to grow deep roots without the Word.

Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

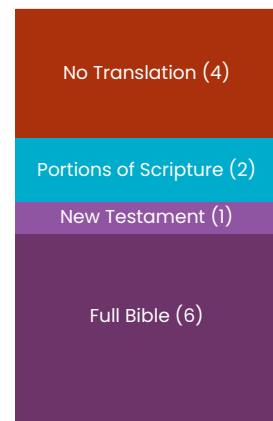
In terms of formats, **print Bibles remain the top priority**, particularly in areas with limited internet access or heightened surveillance. However, **audio** and **digital Bibles** are also important, especially among younger and urban Christians who must navigate government censorship and monitoring.

The Translation Gap

Christians in Nicaragua speak at least 13 languages. Of these languages:

- Only **6** have the full translation of the Bible
- **1** has the New Testament only
- **2** have only portions of Scripture
- **4** languages remain without any translation at all

This translation gap must be addressed to reach marginalized ethnic and indigenous communities, especially those already cut off from broader Christian networks due to language, geography, or political barriers. Translation work and Bible distribution efforts must go hand-in-hand to serve these vulnerable groups.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Nicaragua

THE CLARION CALL

Now is the time for the global Church to respond. In a nation where pastors are imprisoned, churches are raided, and the gospel is under siege, the simple gift of a Bible can ignite a spark of hope. Each Bible delivered is a seed planted in resistance to tyranny—and a lifeline to truth for those longing to hear God’s voice.

Let us not allow silence to reign where the Word of God is meant to be proclaimed.

