



# Bible Access List

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

## Oman

Bible Restrictions Rank: **19**  
**SEVERE ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

Bible Shortage Rank: **63**  
**Bible needs estimate is less than ten thousand**



## An Overview of Bible access in Oman

Oman, home to nearly 5 million people, hosts a small Christian community estimated at around 187,000, roughly 4% of the population. Despite their modest numbers, these believers face significant challenges in accessing Scripture. While it is estimated that the majority of Christians have access, that's about as far as it can go due to severe restrictions.

Navigating Oman's complex web of regulations around Bible importation, printing, possession, and distribution is a significant barrier. Historically, importing Bibles was possible via organizations like the Gulf Bible Society. However, this permission has been revoked, effectively halting the importation of Scripture into the country. Printing Bibles locally is entirely prohibited, as is the open distribution or public display of Christian materials.

Expatriate Christians, mainly located in urban areas like Muscat, Sohar, and Salalah, can bring personal copies of the Bible. However, their religious practices are closely monitored, with all church activities strictly confined to registered church compounds. The authorities maintain vigilant oversight, discouraging any integration of Omani Muslim Background believers or MBBs, as proselytism is illegal and punishable by expulsion or other serious consequences.

For Omani MBBs, Bible access is fraught with even greater risks. Conversion from Islam, although not officially criminalized, is socially unacceptable, and MBBs face severe repercussions including ostracization, loss of employment, and family pressure. Many MBBs must practice their faith privately, without the benefit of a physical Bible due to the risk of discovery and severe social consequences.

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

### How can I pray for Oman?

- **More Access to Scripture.** Pray for creative and effective methods to distribute and share God's Word within the restrictive regulatory framework. May believers successfully find innovative ways to access Scripture safely.
- **Change of Government Policies.** Pray for softened hearts among government officials, leading to a relaxation of restrictive policies. Ask God for policies that facilitate rather than hinder Bible access, allowing believers more freedom to practice their faith.
- **Global Partnerships and Collaborations.** Pray for strengthened global partnerships and innovative solutions that overcome Oman's stringent Bible distribution barriers. May these collaborations lead to greater availability of Scripture tailored to the unique challenges faced by Omani believers.

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

### Bible Access Restrictions

#### Severe Access Restrictions

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

### Other Limiting Factors

#### No Other Factors Identified

### Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is high (over 70%), **estimated** Bible need is <10 thousand

**Main religion:** Islam

**Country population:** 4,714,000

**Christian population:**

- 187,000, 3.96% of total population

**World Watch List:** #32

# WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN OMAN?

Despite Oman's outward image of tolerance, multiple systemic, social, and legal barriers continue to restrict meaningful access to Bibles.

## Social Control and Tribal Pressure

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Omani society is deeply tribal and Islamic in identity. To be Omani is to be Muslim, and breaking with this identity is not only a personal decision but a perceived betrayal of family, tribe, and nation. MBBs often face expulsion from their homes, loss of custody rights, and complete social isolation.

In fear of shaming the family, many MBBs hide their faith completely, making Bible ownership dangerous. In some cases, even personal prayer or Bible reading is discouraged by co-workers and fellow migrants in shared accommodations.

## Government Restrictions and Surveillance

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All religious groups must register with the state, and Christian gatherings, especially those involving nationals, are closely monitored. The publication and distribution of Bibles is strictly limited, with Christian materials only available in small quantities within designated church compounds.

Sharing faith with Muslims is considered proselytism and is punishable by law. This legal and bureaucratic framework severely restricts the availability and distribution of Scripture beyond a narrow circle.

## Fear of Retaliation and Legal Invisibility

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There is no legal recognition for conversion from Islam, which means that MBBs remain legally classified as Muslims. This affects their right to marry, raise their children in the Christian faith, or even possess Christian materials without scrutiny.

Baptisms and Christian weddings must often be conducted in secret. MBBs risk losing jobs, visas, or even citizenship, and Christian expatriates found evangelizing can be expelled without due process.

## Barriers for Expatriate and Migrant Workers

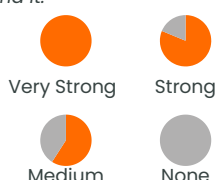
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Although expatriate Christians are technically allowed to worship, many—especially domestic or labor camp workers from Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa—face limitations due to living conditions or hostility from non-Christian co-workers. Some avoid bringing physical Bibles with them entirely, and online discipleship must be done in secret due to fear of being reported.

# Institutional Restrictions on Churches

Churches are barred from organizing events outside their compounds, integrating MBBs, or operating Christian schools or humanitarian organizations. Even simple acts like displaying crosses publicly or importing Bibles must be approved by the state. As a result, opportunities to obtain or interact with the Bible are confined to specific, heavily regulated spaces.

## Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Oman

Oman	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><b>Reference</b></p> <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> ↓	Strong	Not at all	Not at all	Strong	Not at all	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 Oman, multiple forces of persecution operate simultaneously to restrict Bible access, including **Islamic oppression**, **clan oppression**, and **dictatorial paranoia**. These are enforced by a wide range of actors, including government officials, tribal and ethnic group leaders, non-Christian religious leaders, family members, and even ordinary citizens within society.

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 Oman?

## 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.



## A Faith That Must Not Be Challenged

Islam is the state religion in Oman, and Islamic law forms the foundation of the legal system. Apostasy, although not officially criminalized, leads to severe repercussions. MBBs regularly face intense pressure from family, society, and the state. They are closely monitored by security services, compelling many to practice their new faith in secrecy.

For example, in 2024, Omani Christians, particularly MBBs, were routinely interrogated by government officials and warned against meeting with other believers. The pressure to renounce their faith is constant, and threats of job loss, eviction, and citizenship revocation were consistently documented throughout the year. Christians found engaging in evangelism were quietly deported without public trials or formal charges, reinforcing fear among Christian expatriates and local MBBs alike.

Socially, Islamic oppression manifests through severe family responses. Those who openly declare their conversion encountered severe backlash from their families, who considered such decisions not only acts against Islam but also insults to family honor.



## Family First, Faith Last

Omani society remains deeply tribal, and within this structure, family honor and identity are paramount. Conversion to Christianity is seen as a betrayal of family and tribal heritage. An incident in June 2024 in the Dhofar region vividly illustrated how seriously the government and broader society take tribal conformity. Members of the prominent Al-Mashani tribe who chose to follow their own religious calendar for Eid al-Adha celebrations were arrested without charges by the government, reflecting the deeply embedded societal expectations of religious and tribal conformity.

Omani MBBs risk losing all family support, employment connections, and even custody of their children. There are examples where we see fathers who left Islam legally stripped of their parental rights under Omani family law, illustrating the harsh reality of clan-driven persecution and control over religious choices.



## A Nation Under Watch

Under Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's rule, Oman has maintained a tightly controlled and authoritarian environment. All political dissent, criticism, or potentially divisive religious expressions are aggressively monitored and suppressed. Christians, especially MBBs and church leaders, apply rigorous self-censorship in all forms of communication, as government authorities exercised broad powers to monitor, interrogate, and deport individuals deemed a threat to social cohesion or national stability.

Further highlighting this paranoia, government restrictions intensified in 2024, explicitly prohibiting public proselytizing by any religious group other than Islam. Any hint of evangelistic activity or public religious statements resulted in swift deportation or denial of residency for expatriate Christians. Consequently, Bible distribution and even private ownership of Christian materials had to occur discreetly to avoid suspicion or government backlash.

# THE NEED FOR BIBLES IN OMAN

Sure, the majority of Christians may currently have access to the Bible in Oman—but this simply shows a status quo. The restrictions in place stifle the growth of the church. To meet this spiritual need, an estimated number of **less than 10,000 Bibles** can spark growth for the church in Oman.

## A Church With Very Little Growth In Desperate Need of the Bible

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Because of severe societal and governmental pressures, the Christian church in Oman has experienced just about 1% increase over the past five years. This slow growth underscores the urgent need to provide adequate Scripture resources to facilitate discipleship and evangelism. Equipping new believers with Bibles is critical to strengthening their faith amidst ongoing persecution.

## Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

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Given the restrictive environment in Oman, **printed Bibles** remain the highest priority due to their discrete nature and ease of use in private. **Audio Bibles** are also essential, particularly for communities who may have limited literacy or face challenges safely storing printed materials

## The Translation Gap

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Language barriers continue to restrict Bible access significantly. The Christians in Oman speak at least 24 languages. Of these languages:

- Only **15** currently have the full Bible translation available
- **2** languages have only the New Testament
- **4** have portions of the Bible translated
- **3** languages have no Bible translation at all

This means that entire communities are cut off from the gospel. Translating Scripture into these remaining languages is crucial to addressing



Spoken Languages with Believers in Oman

# THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Oman represents more than just logistical or linguistic challenges—it represents a cry for support from the global church. Responding to this urgent need requires commitment and innovative strategies to overcome barriers of persecution and language diversity.

Now is the time to act. Let's partner together in providing Scripture in essential formats while addressing translation gaps, ensuring every believer in Oman experiences the life-changing power of God's Word.



**0.2%**

Annual Church Growth



Bibles needed for both

**Believers  
& Seekers**



**<10k**

Bible needs estimate



**Printed  
Bible**

Preferred Format



**Audio  
Bible**

Format 2nd Priority