



Bible Access List

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

Sudan

Bible Restrictions Rank: **11**
EXTREME ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **31**
Bible needs estimate between two hundred fifty and five hundred thousand



An Overview of Bible access in Sudan

Sudan's Christian population makes up just over 4% of its nearly 50 million people, representing an estimated 2 million believers. Yet despite their presence, access to Bibles remains deeply restricted. Estimates show that fewer than 1 in 5 Christians in Sudan currently have access to a Bible. While some laws technically allow for private ownership, the reality on the ground tells a different story.

The risks associated with importing, printing, storing, or distributing Bibles are severe, particularly for Sudanese believers. These challenges are compounded by widespread monitoring, insecurity, and state resistance to religious expression outside of Islam. In much of Sudan, owning a Bible can be dangerous.

Though expatriates may be allowed to keep personal copies, local believers often face harsh consequences. Printing or importing Bibles is virtually impossible, and distributing them carries serious risks. Even storing a Bible privately can lead to accusations and persecution. Online access offers a glimmer of hope, but even that is under government surveillance, making digital formats fragile and potentially unsafe.

The practical barriers are intensified by Sudan's ongoing humanitarian crisis. This country has more than 11 million internal displaced people, and an estimate of up to 90% of the population lives in poverty. For many, even if Bibles were available, purchasing one would be out of reach. In IDP camps and rural regions, infrastructure is severely damaged, leaving entire communities without stable access to electricity or the internet, further limiting the reach of both digital and audio formats.

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

How can I pray for Sudan?

- **Protection for Believers.** Pray for courage and safety for Christians who own or seek Bibles in Sudan, especially those worshipping in secret.
- **Creative Solutions for Access.** Ask God to open new doors for Scripture to reach believers—through digital means, underground networks, or safe partnerships.
- **Government Transformation.** Pray for a shift in Sudan's leadership and policies that would allow greater freedom of religion and the safe distribution of God's Word.

Bible Access Restrictions

Considerable Access Restrictions

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

Other Limiting Factors

Severe Other Factors

- Extremely Poor
- Poor internet access
- Poor infrastructure
- 50-70% of population access to electricity
- 50-70% literacy

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated** Bible need is between 250 and 500 thousand
- Impacted by armed conflicts

Main religion: Islam

Country population: 49,358,000

Christian population:

2,028,000, 4.11% of total population

World Watch List: #5

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

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN SUDAN?

Legally Possible, Practically Impossible

Access to Bibles in Sudan is severely restricted due to a combination of legal, political, and violent factors. While the law does not explicitly prohibit Bible ownership, the reality for most Christians is vastly different.

Importing and printing Bibles is practically impossible. Efforts to bring in Scripture face bureaucratic obstruction or are quietly suppressed, with reports indicating that even storing Bibles is considered dangerous. Christians risk harassment, arrest, or worse if discovered with Christian materials, especially if they are Muslim Background believers or MBBs or belong to ethnic African communities in conflict zones.

Civil War and Church Destruction

The civil war that erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) intensified the crisis. Over 150 churches have been damaged or destroyed during this conflict, including targeted attacks like the burning of an Evangelical church in Wad Madani and the conversion of a Coptic monastery into a military base by RSF fighters.

In many parts of the country, especially Khartoum, Kordofan, and Darfur, churches are no longer safe gathering places but instead sites of violence, intimidation, or military occupation.

Bureaucratic, Institutional, and Economic Barriers

Beyond violence, bureaucratic restrictions continue to block Bible access. Churches have long been denied legal status, and efforts to register or reopen Christian institutions are often met with silence or rejection by local authorities.

With the return of “morality” policing and government-backed harassment, many Christians are afraid to meet, worship, or even own Scripture. In such a context, any visible expression of Christian faith, including Bible possession, can invite retaliation.

Compounding these challenges is the scale of humanitarian crisis—millions have been displaced by conflict, and widespread poverty leaves many Christians without the means or stability to access Scripture, even if it were available.

Digital Access Under Surveillance

Moreover, digital Bible access remains limited. Though mobile connectivity is relatively high, barely a third of Sudan's population has internet access, and the government regularly shuts down online platforms during times of unrest.

In some cases, telecom infrastructure has been seized or sabotaged during the ongoing conflict, further shrinking digital options for accessing Scripture.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Sudan

Sudan	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 ↓	Very strong	Not at all	Strong	Strong	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Very strong	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									

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 Sudan, Bible access is restricted by a complex blend of persecution forces, the most dominant being **Islamic oppression, dictatorial paranoia, organized corruption and crime, and a fusion of clan oppression and ethno-religious hostility**. These are driven by a mix of government officials, paramilitary groups like the RSF, ethnic and religious leaders, criminal networks, and even one's own extended family.

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 Sudan?

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



Targeted Attacks Against Christians

Islamic oppression in Sudan remains one of the most powerful forces restricting Bible access. Though the regime of Omar al-Bashir ended in 2019, the vision of Sudan as an Islamic state continues to dominate. This ideology is promoted by radical clerics, paramilitary groups, and even ordinary citizens who pressure others to conform to Wahhabi interpretations of Islam.

One of the most concrete examples of this occurred in January 2024, when the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) set fire to a historic Evangelical church in Wad Madani, the largest religious structure in Gezira State, built in 1939.

Just a month prior to that, in December 2023, RSF forces raided a Coptic Christian monastery in the same city, converting it into a military base. During the raid, five priests and five seminarians went missing and have not been seen since.

Militants and extremist groups routinely harass Christians and pressure them to renounce their faith. According to WWL documentation, many Christians have been killed by militants, and those who survive often flee their homes, leaving behind Bibles and spiritual materials to avoid being targeted.



Cracking Down on Christian Institutions

Sudan's government—now dominated by military rule since the October 2021 coup—continues to suppress Christianity using state power. While the brief civilian-led transition in 2019 promised reforms, these gains were reversed following the military takeover.

Since the outbreak of civil war in April 2023, churches have become military targets. By April 2024, over 150 churches had been damaged in the conflict between the SAF and RSF.

One notable case occurred at the Dar Mariam mission in Khartoum's al-Shajara district, where dozens of Christians were trapped without food. In December 2023, a Red Cross rescue attempt was met with gunfire, resulting in two deaths and seven injuries—including three aid workers. Both factions blamed each other, but the Christian community was caught in the crossfire and left stranded without aid.

Christians attempting to reclaim previously confiscated church property have consistently faced state obstruction. Churches are still being denied legal recognition and permits, and many Christian leaders face arbitrary arrests and interrogation for simply leading congregations or requesting documentation.



Looting, Bribes, and Violence

The collapse of central authority and ongoing civil conflict have allowed networks of corruption and armed crime to flourish, further restricting Bible access. Violent groups like the Janjaweed (precursor to the RSF) and newer paramilitary factions have targeted Christian homes, churches, and businesses, often looting them or occupying them by force.

Throughout 2024, at least 200 Christian homes and shops were attacked or looted in Sudan. In multiple instances, these acts had no military objective. They were simply direct attacks against Christians, their property, and livelihoods.

Meanwhile, government officials often collaborate with these criminal networks. They obstruct church registrations, deny building permits, and intimidate Christian leaders in court proceedings. There have been reports of pastors detained without charges and false accusations used to strip churches of land or assets.

The situation is made worse by Sudan's deep economic crisis and mass displacement, with over 11 million internally displaced people and the majority of the population living in poverty. For many Christians, even if they long for a Bible, survival must come first.



Ethnic and clan-based persecution continues to operate alongside religious oppression in Sudan. Arab-led ethnic groups, often supported by state structures, have long targeted African Christian populations, especially in Darfur, Blue Nile State, and the Nuba Mountains.

This was tragically demonstrated in 2023 and 2024, during the ethnic cleansing campaigns in West Darfur. Mass graves were discovered, and the Masalit ethnic group, many of whom are Christians, was specifically targeted by the RSF and allied militias.



These campaigns are not limited to warzones. In daily life, Christians, especially MBBs, are excluded from community events, denied access to inheritance, and buried according to Muslim rites against their wishes. In Al Thora Mobe village, RSF fighters forced Christians to convert to Islam and restricted their movement, with reports of detention and pressure tactics to renounce their faith.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN SUDAN

Despite being home to over two million Christians, Bible access in Sudan remains critically low. To meet the needs of believers, a minimum of **250,000 Bibles** can make a huge difference to bridge the gap and spark hope.

Slow Church Growth in Danger of Stalling

The need becomes even more urgent when we consider the church's slow growth. Despite the relentless pressure from multiple fronts, the church in Sudan has grown by the past five years. That means many new believers—many of whom have never held a Bible of their own. In a nation where church buildings are destroyed, Christian gatherings attacked, and Christians driven into hiding, Bibles become not only a discipleship tool but a lifeline for hope, endurance, and faith.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

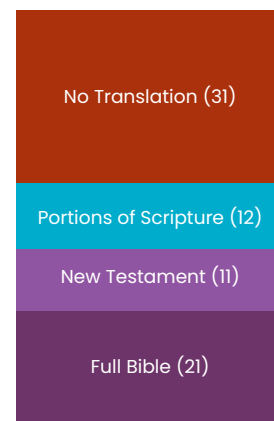
When it comes to Bible formats, **print Bibles** remain the highest priority. Many Sudanese Christians live in regions with little to no internet infrastructure, and the threat of government surveillance makes digital options risky. **Audio Bibles** come next in importance, especially for areas with low literacy rates or for those displaced by war.

The Translation Gap

Sudan's language diversity poses another significant challenge. Christians in Sudan speak at least 75 languages. Of these languages:

- Only **21** have a full Bible translation
- **11** more have translations of the New Testament
- **12** have only partial Scripture translated
- **31 languages are without any translation at all**

This means entire people groups are left with no Bible translation at all. Vast communities remain unreached, unable to read or hear God's Word in a language they understand.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Sudan

THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Sudan cannot be overstated. This is a nation caught in the crossfire of war, repression, and humanitarian collapse. And yet, in the middle of devastation, the light of Christ still burns in the hearts of believers who are desperate for access to His Word.

The call to the global Church is clear: now is the time to act. To stand in the gap. To resource the underground church. To translate, print, and deliver Bibles—whatever it takes. Because in Sudan, the difference between hope and despair may be just one Bible away.



0.6%
Annual Church Growth



Bibles needed for both
Believers & Seekers



250-500k
Bible needs estimate



Printed Bible
Preferred Format



Audio Bible
Format: 2nd Priority