



# Bible Access List

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

## Togo

Bible Restrictions Rank: **58**  
**MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

Bible Shortage Rank: **23**  
**Bible needs estimate between five hundred thousand and one million**



## An Overview of Bible access in Togo

Togo's Christian population makes up a little more than half of its nearly 9.3 million people, amounting to approximately 4.8 million believers. While there are no formal legal restrictions on owning or distributing Bibles, less than 40% of believers have access to Bibles, showing the reality of Bible access shaped by complex regional challenges.

In the northern Savanes region, escalating threats from violent extremist groups have made Christian life increasingly precarious, limiting safe access to Scripture. Additionally, pressure from Muslim communities in the Central Region and deep-rooted traditionalist beliefs in Kara, where ethnic religionists form the vast majority, creates a hostile environment for converts to Christianity, making Bible access particularly difficult for them.

Printing or importing Bibles is not legally restricted, but given the security risks in the north, it is impractical to print, access or store Bibles in those areas. Self-censorship among Christians in these regions helps them manage some of the risks, but it also means that many believers remain without physical access to Scripture. Though this challenge affects only a fraction of Togo's Christian population, it impacts over a third of the total population in the affected regions. In these areas, Christians from a Muslim or animist background face heightened dangers, as owning a Bible can lead to severe consequences, including expulsion from their communities, threats of violence, and social isolation.

The affordability of Bibles also remains a significant barrier. Although urban centers in the south may have easier access to Christian materials, widespread poverty, particularly in rural areas, makes it difficult for many believers to purchase a Bible. The economic divide in Togo is stark—poverty rates are nearly twice as high in rural areas compared to urban ones, and the extreme north is the most impoverished region of the country. Even where digital Bibles could provide an alternative, access to technology remains limited. Less than 40% of the population has internet access, and in rural areas, that number drops significantly. Many households lack electricity, making reliance on digital formats for Bible access unreliable.

Before we continue, would you take a moment to pause and pray for Togo?

### How can I pray for Togo?

- **Safety and Provision.** Pray for the safety of Christians in the Savanes region and other high-risk areas, that they may receive the Word of God without fear.
- **Global Partnerships.** Ask God to raise up partnerships that can provide Bibles in print, digital, and audio formats to meet the diverse needs of believers.
- **Strength for Converts.** Pray for new believers from Muslim and traditionalist backgrounds who face pressure, persecution, and isolation for following Christ.

After praying for Togo, 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

#### Severe Other Factors

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

### Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated** Bible need is between 500 thousand and 1 million

**Main religion:** Christianity

**Country population:** 9,261,000

#### Christian population:

4,803,000, 51.87% of total population

**World Watch List:** #66

# WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN TOGO?

## A Region Under Siege

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In northern Togo, near the border with Burkina Faso, Christians face increasing hostility due to the rise of jihadist activity. Extremist groups, emboldened by instability in neighboring Burkina Faso, have begun penetrating northern Togo, particularly in the **Savanes region**. These militants, often linked to groups operating in the Sahel, have carried out attacks that have killed Christians and forced many to flee their homes. Muslim Background believers or MBBs in these areas are particularly vulnerable, often facing intense pressure to renounce their faith, and some have even been expelled from their families.

The Togolese government has responded by increasing military presence and imposing travel restrictions, but this has done little to protect Christian communities. Instead, fear and insecurity have made it nearly impossible for believers in the north to worship openly, let alone access or distribute Bibles.

## Daily Risks and Bible Access

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While there are no official bans on Bibles in Togo, believers in the north must exercise caution in owning, reading, or sharing Scripture. Jihadist groups have targeted churches, with five churches attacked in 2024. Some Christians have had to go into hiding, while others were killed for their faith. In these high-risk areas, transporting or storing Bibles can make someone a target.

Beyond extremist threats, clan oppression in traditional regions also restricts Bible access. Many communities, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of Togo, still practice Voodoo and animist traditions, where converting to Christianity is seen as an act of defiance against the community. Converts are sometimes forced to participate in Voodoo ceremonies and can be denied access to shared village resources, making it difficult to sustain a Christian lifestyle.










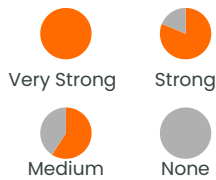
## Poverty and Practical Barriers

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Even in areas without direct violence, economic hardship prevents many from obtaining a Bible. Over 30% of Togolese households struggle to afford basic food staples, leaving little room for purchasing religious materials. This is especially pronounced in rural areas, where extreme poverty is concentrated.

Additionally, technological barriers limit digital Bible access. While internet penetration has risen slightly, a significant portion of the population remains offline, and only 10% use social media—a key platform for accessing digital Bibles. Many rural Christians, particularly in the north, have no reliable electricity, making audio and digital Bibles ineffective solutions in some regions.

# Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Togo

Togo	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>	Medium	Not at all	Not at all	Medium	Weak	Not at all	Not at all	Medium	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										

Bible access is hindered not by direct legal restrictions but by the combination of multiple persecution engines. These include **Islamic oppression, clan oppression, dictatorial paranoia, and organized corruption and crime**. These forces, either independently or in combination, often involve government officials, ethnic group leaders, non-Christian religious leaders, normal citizens, extended family, and organized crime.

## 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.



### The Rising Threat of Jihadist Expansion in Northern Togo

Islamic oppression in Togo is primarily concentrated in the northern regions, where the Muslim population is dominant. While the country has not yet seen large-scale Islamic militancy within its borders, the growing jihadist presence in neighboring Burkina Faso has significantly impacted the security situation. Extremist groups have launched cross-border attacks, leading to an increase in radicalization among local Muslim youth. This has heightened risks for Christians, especially MBBs, who face pressure to renounce their faith. Families and communities often subject MBBs to harassment, social isolation, and in some cases, expulsion from their homes.

The rising influence of radical Islamic groups has made evangelism among Muslims increasingly dangerous. Christian missionaries and pastors working in these regions report growing hostility, with some receiving threats for sharing their faith. In several cases, churches have been attacked, and at least five Christians were killed by violent Islamic militants during the most recent reporting period. The fear of persecution and the risk of violence have forced many believers to practice their faith in secret, further limiting access to the Bible and Christian discipleship.



## Voodoo's Grip on Converts and Christian Worship

Beyond Islamic oppression, clan oppression rooted in traditional African belief systems—particularly Voodoo—is another significant barrier to Bible access in Togo. This persecution engine is most pronounced in the southern and central regions, where traditional ethnic leaders and Voodoo priests wield significant social and cultural power. Christians, especially those who have converted from traditional religions, often face coercion to participate in Voodoo rituals. In some cases, they are forcibly involved in ceremonies that directly contradict their Christian faith.

The pressure extends beyond social ostracization. Many Christian converts from traditional religions report being disowned by their families, expelled from their homes, or even threatened with violence if they refuse to engage in animistic practices. This makes it extremely difficult for new believers to access Bibles or Christian resources, as they often lack the community support needed to sustain their faith. Additionally, the stronghold of Voodoo in these areas means that Christian churches are sometimes viewed as threats to traditional culture, making the establishment of new churches—and the distribution of Bibles—an uphill battle.



## A Government That Sees The Church as a Threat

Togo's political landscape is marked by over five decades of rule by the Gnassingbé family, which has maintained power through authoritarian control, electoral manipulation, and suppression of opposition voices. While Christianity is not officially banned, the government exercises control over religious activities, particularly those perceived as politically or socially influential. Churches and Christian organizations that speak out against corruption, injustice, or human rights violations face bureaucratic hurdles and restrictions.

Christian groups attempting to build new churches or distribute Bibles often encounter delays in obtaining permits. In some cases, Christian leaders who have openly criticized government policies have faced intimidation, surveillance, or even legal action. The state's heavy-handed approach to governance discourages open evangelism and public expressions of faith, leading many believers to practice caution when engaging in Bible distribution efforts.



## Exploiting Faith Communities for Financial Gain

Corruption is deeply embedded in Togo's government and economic structures. Ranked 126 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, Togo struggles with systemic bribery, nepotism, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These challenges extend to religious communities, where churches and Christian organizations must navigate a corrupt system to obtain necessary permits, import Christian literature, or conduct charitable work.

Christians who take a stand against corruption or attempt to expose unethical practices risk retaliation. In some instances, pastors and church leaders advocating for justice have faced threats or harassment. Furthermore, organized crime networks, some with connections to government officials, exploit the country's instability to operate with impunity. Christian communities in rural areas, particularly those advocating for transparency and ethical governance, are often targeted, further complicating Bible access and distribution efforts.

# THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN TOGO

Despite the presence of a vibrant Christian population in Togo, access to Scripture remains critically low. Research estimates that less than 40% of believers have a Bible, leaving a significant portion of the Christian community without access to God's Word. The need is particularly urgent among both Protestant and Catholic communities, with an estimated 1 million Bibles required to meet the needs of current believers.

Additionally, as the church continues to grow rapidly, additional Bibles are needed to reach seekers eager to learn more about Christianity. All in all, this underscores a profound spiritual hunger and highlight the pressing need to supply Bibles to strengthen the faith of believers and those exploring Christianity.

## A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

Togo's church has experienced significant growth, over the last five years. This surge in Christian conversions and church attendance reflects a deep spiritual movement across the nation. However, this growth presents an urgent challenge: how to adequately supply the expanding Christian community with the Bibles they need for discipleship, worship, and evangelism. Without access to Scripture, many new believers are left without essential guidance in their faith, making Bible distribution a critical priority to sustain and support the expanding church.

## Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

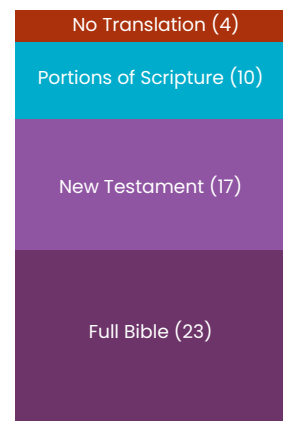
To meet this need effectively, the availability of Bibles in various formats is essential. In Togo, **printed Bibles** remain the highest priority due to the limited access to digital resources. **Audio Bibles** are also crucial, particularly for those who are illiterate or have difficulty reading.

## The Challenge of Bible Translations

The linguistic diversity of Togo further compounds the challenge. Christians in the country collectively speak at least 54 languages, yet:

- Only **23** of these languages have a full Bible translation
- **17** languages have translations to just the New Testament
- **10** have only portions of the Bible available
- **4** languages remain without any Scripture translation

These translation gaps highlight the urgent need for expanded Bible translation efforts to ensure that every believer can read and understand Scripture in their native tongue.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Togo

# THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Togo is not merely a logistical issue. It is a commission that needs an urgent response. It is a call for the global church to act with urgency and commitment. Millions of Christians in Togo are longing for the hope, encouragement, and wisdom found in the pages of Scripture, yet many remain without a Bible.

This is a moment for action. By prioritizing Bible distribution in print and audio formats, accelerating translation projects, and mobilizing resources, we can ensure that every Christian in Togo, both believers and seekers, has access to the life-transforming power of God's Word. The time to act is now.



**3.8%**  
Annual Church  
Growth



Bibles needed for both  
**Believers  
& Seekers**



**500k-  
1 million**  
Bible needs estimate



**Printed  
Bible**  
Preferred Format



**Audio  
Bible**  
Format 2nd Priority