



Bible Access List

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

Tunisia

Bible Restrictions Rank: **14**
EXTREME ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible Shortage Rank: **68**
Bible needs estimate is less than ten thousand



An Overview of Bible access in Tunisia

Tunisia, a country of over 12.5 million people, is home to a small Christian minority—almost 24,000 believers, not even half a percent of the population. Among them, an even smaller fraction, less than 35%, have regular access to a Bible. This stark reality exists within a society that's almost universally Muslim and governed by increasingly authoritarian leadership.

The restrictions on Bible access in Tunisia are extreme and systemic. While the law does not explicitly ban Bible ownership, in practice, almost every avenue for acquiring Scripture is blocked. Importing or printing Bibles is not viable, and any shipment risks confiscation. Storing Bibles, especially in Arabic, is perilous, often stifled through house raids and seizure of materials.

Christians are often forced to hide their Bibles, if they own one at all, especially Muslim Background believers or MBB who are watched by family and monitored by the government. Public distribution is not allowed as it is perceived to be evangelism or proselytism which is forbidden. Even digital access, while technically possible through Tunisia's relatively high internet penetration, is monitored by state authorities and can be risky.

Despite this grim landscape, Tunisia's infrastructure offers a flicker of hope. The country has 100% electricity coverage and widespread mobile access. Yet, this must be weighed against the reality that most believers fear reading the Bible even in private, and public evangelism is virtually impossible. Societal hostility remains deeply entrenched, particularly in rural regions, where Islamic conservatism dominates and MBBs face rejection, abuse, and in some cases, forced marriage or relocation.

The barriers are not only legal and cultural—they are linguistic. Most Bibles available are in foreign languages for expatriates. Arabic Bibles are scarce and heavily restricted. Indigenous believers, especially those from Berber (Amazigh) backgrounds or rural areas, face additional challenges if Scripture is not available in their heart language. Meanwhile, the government recognizes a limited number of foreign churches, but indigenous believers are left without legal congregations or the freedom to gather for worship.

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

How can I pray for Tunisia?

- **Protection and Provision.** Echoing Brother Andrew's prayer for God to "make seeing eyes blind," let's intercede for Tunisian believers trying to access Bibles. Pray that God shields them from surveillance and persecution, and that His Word reaches them through safe, creative means.
- **Global Partnerships and Support.** Pray for increased global attention to Tunisia's situation. Ask God to raise up bold partners and mission movements that can work wisely to provide Scripture—through translation, technology, and underground networks.
- **Open Hearts and Free Access.** Pray for a move of God among Tunisia's leaders and citizens. Ask Him to soften hearts, break through the spiritual strongholds, and make Tunisia a nation where the Gospel can flow freely and openly once more.

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

Bible Access Restrictions

Considerable Access Restrictions

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

Other Limiting Factors

Considerable Other Factors

- Pockets of poverty
- Extremely poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated Bible need is <10 thousand**

Main religion: Islam

Country population: 12,565,000

Christian population:

23,300, 0.19% of total population

World Watch List: #34

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN TUNISIA?

Hidden but Hostile: A Culture of Secrecy and Surveillance

Bible access in Tunisia is significantly restricted not by explicit legal bans, but by a web of societal, governmental, and familial pressures that make open Christian expression highly challenging—especially for Tunisian MBBs. These believers often face intense opposition from their own families, including house arrest, forced marriage, and even expulsion from their homes. In rural regions, particularly in the conservative south, family-driven persecution is more severe, whereas urban areas like Tunis offer limited anonymity but not full safety.

Social Pressure and Isolation

Beyond the family unit, societal pressure plays a major role. MBBs can be ostracized by neighbors, lose their jobs, or be excluded from educational opportunities. In some cases, Christian students have been expelled or denied schooling altogether after their faith became known.

Public religious expression—such as wearing a cross, speaking about Christianity, or gathering for worship—is risky and often met with harassment or discrimination.

Legal Grey Zones and Lack of Recognition

On a national level, Tunisia's constitution grants vague and limited protections for religious freedom. While the state no longer officially names Islam as its religion, it mandates the government to fulfill "the purposes of Islam," leaving room for restrictive interpretations.

Christian churches, especially those run by local believers, are not recognized legally. As a result, Tunisian Christians are unable to register churches, hold public gatherings, or import Christian literature, including Bibles in Arabic.

Monitored and Intimidated

Surveillance and intimidation further complicate access. Christians are regularly monitored by police, especially online, and have been detained and interrogated for faith-related activities. House churches have been looted, believers have been forced to relocate, and others have been pressured to recant their faith. Even when not physically harmed, many live under the constant threat of exposure, losing their livelihood, family, or safety.

Racial Discrimination Adds Another Layer

While expatriate churches operate with some freedom, they are limited to foreign nationals and are not permitted to evangelize. Sub-Saharan African Christians residing in Tunisia face additional racial discrimination and violence, further limiting safe access to spiritual resources.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Tunisia

Tunisia	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
Persecution Engines →										<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>
Persecution Drivers ↓	Strong	Not at all	Not at all	Very weak	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Medium	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 Tunisia, two major forces of persecution work in tandem to restrict Bible access—mainly **Islamic oppression** and **dictatorial paranoia**. These forces are driven by government officials, extended family members, local religious leaders, violent Islamic groups, and even ordinary citizens, creating a widespread and multi-layered resistance to the presence of Christianity.

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 Tunisia?

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.



Family Rejection, Forced Conversions, and Societal Hostility

Islamic oppression is the strongest persecution engine in Tunisia, rooted deeply in both private and public life. MBBs are frequently subjected to intense pressure by their families, often resulting in physical abuse, house arrest, or being cut off entirely from their communities. This was starkly evident throughout 2024, when several young female MBBs, especially in rural areas, were forcefully relocated, isolated, and pressured into marriages against their will.

These acts of coercion are not isolated. In many regions outside the capital, Christians faced mental and physical abuse after their conversions became known, often at the hands of their own relatives. Entire communities have turned hostile; in multiple towns, house churches were attacked or looted by neighbors, effectively driving believers underground. Such incidents reinforce a chilling reality—owning or sharing Scripture is not just taboo, but dangerous.

The threat also extends to public spaces. Christians avoid displaying crosses or speaking about their faith openly, particularly in rural areas where conservative Islamic norms dominate. Meanwhile, radical Islamic groups, although weakened in recent years, continue to operate in the country's southern border zones. Their presence reinforces fear, especially for those who seek to gather for worship or share Scripture. Even online spaces are unsafe, as MBBs are often tracked and harassed for posting Christian content, forcing many to use pseudonyms or abandon social media altogether.



State Surveillance and Legal Marginalization of Christians

The second major engine of persecution is Tunisia's authoritarian political climate, characterized by increasing dictatorial control under President Kais Saied. Since his 2021 power grab and the adoption of the 2022 Constitution, Tunisia's democratic safeguards have eroded, particularly protections around freedom of belief which were already quite weak before. The new constitution mandates the state to uphold "the purposes of Islam," placing religious minorities like Christians in a precarious legal position.

In 2024, several Tunisian Christians were publicly arrested and interrogated by police for their faith-related activities—particularly outside Tunis. While no formal charges were filed, the public nature of these arrests had a stigmatizing effect, isolating believers from their families and communities. These incidents demonstrate how state actors use intimidation, not just laws, to control Christian expression.

Restrictions extend to the church itself. House churches continue to be unrecognized and therefore illegal, while no new church registrations have been granted since Tunisia's independence in 1956. Christians attempting to gather for worship in private homes face the constant risk of surveillance or raids. Moreover, Arabic-language Bibles and other Christian materials are routinely confiscated at customs, further cutting off access to God's Word.

State security services also monitor online activity. Even something as routine as applying for a passport can trigger interrogation if the applicant is known to be a Christian. These layers of surveillance, restriction, and legal ambiguity make it clear: Bible access is not just hindered by religious hostility—it is systemically obstructed by the state.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN TUNISIA

Against the backdrop of persecution, societal pressure, and linguistic barriers, Bible access in Tunisia remains critically low. An estimated number **less than 10,000 Bibles** can not only bridge the gap but be a game-changer for growth and evangelism.

A Church Struggling to Grow Without Scripture

In the last five years, Tunisia's Christian population has more or less remained the same. And it underscores just how urgently Scripture is needed. Amid intense societal pressure, surveillance, and isolation, the Church is holding on, but without access to Bibles, it cannot meaningfully expand or disciple new believers.

Especially for seekers and MBBs, the absence of Scripture makes it nearly impossible to grow in faith or sustain Christian identity. The Church in Tunisia doesn't just need Bibles—it needs them now, before what little momentum exists is lost.

Bible Formats for Unique Needs

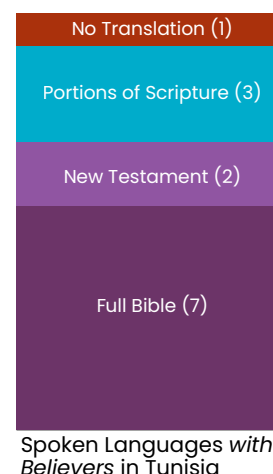
Printed Bibles remain the most essential format for distribution, especially for those without consistent digital access. However, **video resources** are increasingly vital for engaging young, media-savvy Tunisians and for providing accessible Scripture to those facing literacy challenges or family restrictions. Given that nearly 80% of the population has internet access, mostly via mobile phones, video can serve as a strategic second-tier delivery method for the gospel in restricted or hostile environments.

The Translation Gap

When it comes to language access, significant gaps remain. Among the 13 languages spoken by Christians in Tunisia:

- Only **7** have a full Bible translation
- **2** have only the New Testament
- **3** have partial Scripture
- **1 is left with no translation at all**

These gaps prevent hundreds from encountering God's Word in their heart language and underscore the urgency of ongoing translation efforts.



THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Tunisia is not just statistical—it is spiritual. It is the cry of a Church tested by fire and longing for truth. Tunisian believers, many of them MBBs, face opposition, job loss, social isolation, and even threats of violence simply for choosing Christ.

And yet, the hunger for God's Word persists.

This is a call to the global Church: now is the time to respond. Through coordinated efforts in print, video, and translation, we can provide Scripture to every believer in Tunisia, whether hidden in the city of Tunis or isolated in rural southern towns.

Let us not wait for the climate to be favorable. Let us act in faith, ensuring that every believer, seeker, and new disciple has access to the life-changing power of God's Word.



0.2%
Annual Church
Growth



Bibles needed for both
**Believers
& Seekers**



<10k
Bible needs estimate



**Audio
Bible**
Preferred Format



**Video
Bible**
Format 2nd Priority