



# Uganda

Bible Restrictions Rank: **60**  
**MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

Bible Shortage Rank: **7**  
**Bible needs estimate between three and five million**



## An Overview of Bible access in Uganda

Uganda is a deeply Christian nation, with nearly 84% of almost 50 million people identifying as Christians. Yet despite this overwhelming majority, Bible access remains a critical issue even if there are minimal legal restrictions. Estimates indicate that less than half of believers currently have access to the Bible, leaving millions without personal access to Scripture. This gap highlights a spiritual crisis in a nation where faith is central to daily life, but Scripture remains out of reach for many.

Legally, Bible import, ownership and distribution are permitted, and printing is generally unrestricted across most of Uganda. However, practical access is uneven. In Western Uganda, especially in five districts plagued by violence from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)—an ISIS-affiliated group—Christians face life-threatening conditions. With a population of 2.3 million in those districts alone, the impact represents nearly 6% of the national Christian population. In these high-risk zones, getting access to Bibles, storing or printing Bibles can be dangerous, and churches are frequent targets of violent attacks and arson.

In Eastern Uganda, where radical Islamic ideologies have gained ground, Christians, particularly Muslim Background believers, endure frequent harassment, social exclusion, and even physical attacks. These pressures are compounded by economic hardship. Widespread poverty and logistical obstacles make importing Bibles costly, while government-imposed taxes and bureaucracy further strain church and ministry budgets.

Digital solutions offer some promise, but they remain limited. Only 10% of the country is connected to the internet, and less than half of the country is powered with electricity, leaving digital Bibles out of reach for the majority, especially in rural areas.

Against these overlapping barriers—extremism, poverty, and infrastructure gaps—the need for Bibles in Uganda is urgent.

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

### How can I pray for Uganda?

- **Provision for the Bible Shortage.** Pray for a surge of supply to meet the Bible shortage within Uganda's church community. Ask for God's guidance and provision to ensure that every believer has access to a Bible.
- **Global Partnerships.** Ask the Lord to raise up global partnerships and collaborations. Pray for connections between Ugandan churches and international organizations, that together, they get to develop innovative solutions to overcome logistical and financial barriers to Bible access and shortage.
- **Peace and Prosperity.** Lift up both Eastern and Western Uganda in your prayers—asking for an end to conflict and for a safe, favorable environment that allows the Word of God to be distributed freely. Pray also for economic stability so churches and local ministries can fulfill their calling without restriction.

After praying for Uganda, 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

#### Extreme Other Factors

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

### Bible Shortages Among Believers

- Bible ownership is low, **estimated** Bible need is between 3 and 5 million

**Main religion:** Christianity

**Country population:** 49,924,000

**Christian population:**

41,726,000, 83.58% of total population

**World Watch List: #72**

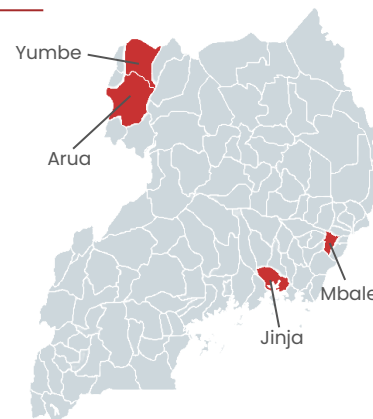
# WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN UGANDA?

## Extremist Violence in Eastern Regions

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In eastern Uganda, Bible access is increasingly threatened by radical Islamic actors. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), affiliated with the Islamic State, have specifically targeted Christian communities, schools, and churches. Areas with a high Muslim population—such as Jinja, Arua, Yumbe, and Mbale—report frequent acts of hostility against Christians, especially MBBs.

In these regions, Christians face mob violence, intimidation, and in some cases, forced displacement, making it dangerous to gather, worship, or even possess Christian materials.



## Pressure on MBBs and Community Rejection

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MBBs face some of the most severe challenges. Once discovered, they may be subjected to house arrest, expulsion from their families and communities, or even violent assault.

In some Muslim-majority areas, families of MBBs confiscate their Bibles and actively work to suppress their new faith. Female MBBs are especially vulnerable, sometimes being forced into marriage or subjected to domestic abuse as a form of coercion.

## Disruption of Church Activities and Monitoring

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While Uganda is a majority-Christian country, churches still experience active obstruction in certain areas. In Muslim-majority districts, church buildings have been vandalized or burned, and worship services have been attacked.

Local officials have been known to shut down churches or deny permits without clear legal basis. Christian gatherings are also closely monitored, and community opposition often prevents outdoor Christian activities from taking place.

## Digital and Physical Barriers to Scripture Access

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Despite growing digital adoption, most of Uganda (around 90%) remains offline. In rural communities, where persecution tends to be more severe, limited internet access hinders the use of online or app-based Bibles.

While mobile penetration is relatively high, stable electricity and digital infrastructure are still lacking in many areas, making print Bibles a critical yet scarce resource.

# Systemic Discrimination and Weak Legal Protections

In regions where Muslims dominate civil service roles, Christians can face systemic discrimination when engaging with local authorities. Courts and administrative bodies sometimes favor the majority religion, complicating legal matters related to property, church operation, or community resource access.

This weak legal environment exacerbates the vulnerability of Christian communities and further impedes efforts to distribute Bibles or organize outreach efforts.

## Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Uganda

| Uganda                                 | 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>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                | Weak            | Weak                                | Not at all                              | Not at all          | Medium               | Weak                           |  |
| 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 Uganda, multiple forces of persecution operate simultaneously to restrict Bible access—with major players involving **Islamic oppression** and **dictatorial paranoia**. These are often fueled by government officials, Muslim religious leaders, violent extremist groups, family members, and citizens within the community.

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 Uganda?

## 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 Rising Tide of Radicalization and Targeted Violence

Islamic oppression remains the strongest engine of persecution in Uganda, particularly in eastern regions such as Mbale, Iganga, Jinja, Yumbe, and Kasese, where Muslim communities are concentrated and increasingly radicalized. Aggressive movements like the Tabliqs have been active in spreading stricter interpretations of Islam, pressuring local populations and MBBs to adhere—or suffer the consequences.

This persecution is deeply personal and communal. MBBs are frequently ostracized, beaten, or placed under house arrest by their own families. In many instances, possession of Christian materials like Bibles can lead to expulsion, physical assault, or even death. Imams and sheikhs in these areas reportedly incite hatred toward Christians in sermons, further deepening the danger for new believers.

ADF-NALU (Allied Democratic Forces), now affiliated with the Islamic State, has escalated its attacks on Christian communities. The group has carried out high-profile attacks such as the June 2023 massacre of at least 37 Christian students at a secondary school in Mpondwe. In October 2023, ADF terrorists killed a tourist couple and their guide, and later that year, planted explosives disguised as gifts in churches in Kampala—attacks that directly targeted Christians and churches.

These acts not only result in loss of life, but instill fear that severely restricts worship, evangelism, and the safe circulation of Bibles.



## Silencing the Voice of the Church

The Ugandan government, under the long rule of President Yoweri Museveni, exhibits some level of dictatorial paranoia, which undermines civil liberties and indirectly restricts Bible access through control and surveillance of the Church. President Museveni's administration has eliminated constitutional term and age limits to entrench his power and routinely uses state mechanisms to suppress dissent.

Christians who speak out against injustice, corruption, or human rights violations risk becoming targets. Churches that are vocal about persecution or societal problems face harassment, surveillance, and even forced closures. One example is a church in Pallisa that was shut down by local authorities without any legal justification. Permits for church construction or events are often delayed or denied, while outspoken pastors and Christian civil society leaders are monitored or intimidated.

In some cases, government officials interfere with church leadership decisions or attempt to influence appointments to ensure loyalty, weakening the Church's independence. This ongoing suppression erodes trust, creates self-censorship, and complicates efforts to distribute Bibles—particularly in public or government-scrutinized spaces.

# THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN UGANDA

Against the backdrop of increasing persecution, economic hardship, and uneven Bible translation coverage, access to Scripture in Uganda remains critically limited. To meet the current and growing need, rough estimates reveal that **at minimum between 3 – 5 million Bibles** are needed to make a difference for our brothers and sisters in Uganda.

## A Growing Church, A Growing Demand

Over the past five years, it is estimated that the Christian population has grown by nearly 5%. While this looks like small growth, it still equates to hundreds of thousands of new believers. Many of these are from rural or persecuted areas, especially in eastern Uganda where Christians, particularly converts from Islam, face intense social hostility and violent persecution from both family and extremist groups.

As this growth continues, so does the need for Scripture to disciple new believers and sustain church communities under pressure.

## Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

For most Christians in Uganda, **print Bibles** remain the highest priority, especially in rural areas where digital infrastructure is lacking. **Audio Bibles** also serve a vital role for believers in low-literacy settings and for those who must worship in secret.

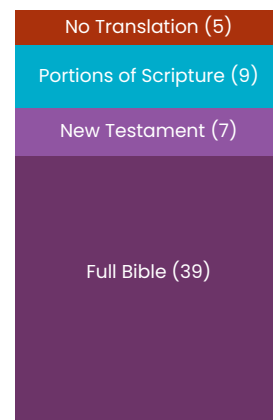
With the majority of the population is offline and over half are without electricity, digital formats are far from being a comprehensive solution—at least for now.

## The Challenge of Bible Translations

Christians in Uganda speak at least **60 different languages**. Of these languages:

- Only **39** have a full translation of the entire Bible
- **7** languages have only the New Testament
- **9** have only portions of scripture
- Alarmingly, **5 more languages still have no translation at all**

This leaves many communities cut off from the Word of God in their heart language—unable to encounter the gospel in a way that is both personal and transformative. Without significant investments in translation, entire people groups will remain spiritually isolated.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Uganda

# THE CLARION CALL

Uganda is a country where the Church is growing, the spiritual hunger is rising, and the threat of persecution is real. Yet in this fragile-but-fertile environment, millions are still waiting to hold a Bible in their hands or hear it in their heart language.

This is more than a logistical challenge; it's a spiritual crisis. Now is the time for the global Church to rise. We must rally around our Ugandan brothers and sisters by providing Bibles in print and audio formats, accelerating translation work, and supporting bold distribution efforts.

By doing so, we don't just deliver Scripture. We deliver the very Word of God that brings hope, strength, and light into the darkest places in Uganda.



**0.8%**  
Annual Church  
Growth



Bibles needed for both  
**Believers  
& Seekers**



**3-5 million**  
Bible needs estimate



**Printed  
Bible**  
Preferred Format



**Audio  
Bible**  
Format 2nd Priority