



Bible Access List

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

Venezuela

Bible Restrictions Rank: **73**
MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Bible shortage has been confirmed



An Overview of Bible Access in Venezuela

Venezuela is a nation of around 29 million people, with over 92% identifying as Christian. Yet despite this religious majority, Bible ownership remains surprisingly low. Research estimates that below 40% believers have access to the Scriptures. This means that millions of Christians, especially those in rural areas or under-resourced communities, are still waiting for a Bible they can call their own.

On paper, Venezuela presents few formal restrictions to Bible access. The government does not ban the Bible, and Christians are technically free to worship. However, in practice, access is deeply constrained by layers of bureaucratic control, state paranoia, and logistical challenges. Under the ideology of Chavismo, the regime seeks to portray itself as the sole provider for the people, which has created a climate of distrust toward external assistance, including Bible imports. To bring in large shipments of Bibles, organizations must register, secure hard-to-obtain permits, and often face prohibitive import duties.

Even local printing is virtually impossible due to permit denials and the scarcity of materials. While storing Bibles is technically permitted for registered groups, the climate of government suspicion and intimidation means that few churches or ministries feel safe doing so at scale.

While the regime attempts to divide churches into loyalists and dissidents, offering benefits to those who comply and blocking aid to those who do not, the Christian community has remained remarkably steadfast. The Evangelical and Pentecostal churches are expanding, especially in underserved areas, often providing not only spiritual hope but humanitarian aid where the state has failed. These ministries face constant harassment, from the closure of church buildings to violent threats from criminal gangs who dominate large regions of the country and view the church's presence as a threat.

Internet-driven Bible access remains an option, particularly among younger, urban Venezuelans. With high literacy rates and widespread mobile usage, digital Bibles and Bible apps provide an important supplement to Scripture access. However, inflation and the fragile economy have made both internet service and digital devices expensive luxuries for many families.

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

How can I pray for Venezuela?

- **Open Access to Bibles.** Pray for the removal of the bureaucratic and ideological barriers that make it difficult to bring Bibles into the country. Ask God to create supernatural pathways for both physical and digital Scripture to reach those who need it most.
- **Global Partnerships and Innovation** Ask the Lord to stir up new global collaborations and creative distribution methods that can overcome import restrictions and logistical hurdles. Pray that new networks rise up to ensure every believer in Venezuela has access to a Bible.
- **End to Governmental Control.** Pray for a softening of hearts among Venezuela's leaders, and for the dismantling of the culture of fear and paranoia that suppresses religious expression. Intercede for courage among church leaders and justice for those who are persecuted for their faith.

• *After praying for Venezuela, continue reading on the next page to learn more.*

Bible Access Restrictions

Minimal Access Restrictions



Import restrictions



Print restrictions



Storage restrictions



Distribution restrictions

Other Limiting Factors

Some Other Factors



Extremely poor infrastructure

Bible Shortages Among Believers



Bibles are needed for believers and seekers

Main religion: Christianity

Country population: 29,395,000

Christian population:



27,137,000, 92.32% of total population

World Watch List: #71

WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN VENEZUELA?

A Region Under Pressure

Across Venezuela, government hostility and the unchecked power of criminal groups present serious barriers to Bible access. While the constitution officially guarantees religious freedom, Christians, particularly those critical of the regime or involved in humanitarian aid, face threats, surveillance, and punishment. In regions such as Sucre, Táchira, Apure, and Amazonas, criminal organizations, including Colombian guerrilla groups like the ELN, impose control over church activities. In some areas, Christian leaders must report their movements and seek permission before offering aid or holding services, or risk retaliation.



Obstruction by Government Authorities

Churches and Christian organizations are often seen as threats by the Maduro regime, especially when their teachings or activities highlight corruption, human rights abuses, or societal needs. This has led to defamation, arbitrary arrests, church closures, and disruption of religious gatherings. The regime uses legal tools like the "Law Against Hate" to criminalize public Christian speech and label dissenters as enemies of the state. Church registration is a long, restrictive process, often withheld from non-Catholic groups that do not openly support the government.

Targeted Attacks and Intimidation

Christian leaders have been targeted with smear campaigns, false accusations (including terrorism), and violence. In 2024, at least three Christian leaders were killed, while others were forced to flee their homes after threats from armed groups. In border regions, churches must navigate both government pressure and the authority of paramilitary or guerrilla forces, some of which violently oppose church teachings that conflict with their criminal agendas.

Economic and Legal Barriers

The deep economic crisis exacerbates Bible access. Many churches lack resources to import or distribute Scripture, and restrictions on non-governmental organizations make it difficult to operate legally or receive foreign support. The state's control over food and services is also used to manipulate religious groups—those who align with the government may receive benefits, while others are excluded or punished. Additionally, Christian civil society groups face threats of closure under pending legislation aimed at suppressing foreign-supported activities.

Surveillance and Censorship

Christian communities are under intense surveillance by state intelligence agencies and local informants, including family members or “colectivos” (pro-government civilian groups). Preaching is monitored for criticism of government policies, and any religious literature or speech deemed subversive may lead to arrest. Self-censorship is common among Christian leaders and congregants, especially in regions dominated by criminal actors or under tight government control.

Unmasking the Forces That Restrict Bible Access in Venezuela

Venezuela	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 ↓	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Very weak	Weak	Strong	Very weak	Strong	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						+	+	+	

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 Venezuela, Bible access is increasingly endangered by a dangerous convergence of three main persecution engines: **dictatorial paranoia, communist and post-communist oppression, and organized corruption and crime**. Together, these forces have created an environment of fear, intimidation, and control. They are mostly driven by government officials, political parties, revolutionaries or paramilitary groups, and sometimes even normal citizens.

The World Watch List 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 Venezuela?

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.



Under **Dictatorial Paranoia**, the government, led by President Nicolás Maduro, monitors, censors, and targets any religious activity perceived as politically oppositional. Churches that speak out against human rights violations, support democratic reforms, or operate independent humanitarian efforts often face direct retaliation.

This includes church closures, arbitrary arrests, and harassment by state security forces such as the Bolivarian National Guard, police, and intelligence agencies. A clear example occurred in July 2024, when military officers shut down a church in Sucre after it distributed flood relief without presidential approval.



Communist and post-Communist oppression further exacerbates the problem. The regime demands ideological alignment from all institutions, including churches. Those that refuse to adopt or endorse Socialist-Communist principles face legal obstacles, the denial of registration, surveillance, and censorship.

Faith-based social work or preaching that promotes biblical views on life, family, or freedom are regularly labeled as subversive, even imperialist, threats to national sovereignty. Churches that partner with international organizations to meet basic needs are especially at risk of government crackdown or criminalization.



Layered atop this is **organized corruption and crime**, which flourishes amid government complicity and impunity. Venezuela’s status as a narco-state has empowered criminal networks—including paramilitary colectivos and Colombian guerrilla groups like the ELN and ex-FARC—to control entire regions, particularly along the border. In these areas, churches must seek permission from armed groups to distribute aid or hold services. Evangelists and pastors face threats, extortion, and even murder.

In 2024, at least three Christian leaders were killed for standing against the criminal status quo.

The Impact on Bible Access

The blend of authoritarian control and criminal intimidation has deeply compromised the free flow of Scripture. Churches risk losing legal status if they refuse to align with the regime, making the import, printing, and distribution of Bibles increasingly difficult. In border regions, Bible delivery efforts are routinely obstructed by criminal groups who view Christian influence as a threat to their authority. The pressure is especially intense during election periods, when the regime doubles down on silencing dissent—including biblical preaching that promotes truth, justice, and hope.

From Caracas to the rural interior, believers must navigate a hostile landscape just to gather, read, and share the Word of God. And in regions where violence or ideological coercion is greatest, even owning a Bible can become a dangerous act of defiance.

This climate of fear—where government pressure meets guerrilla violence—has turned Venezuela into one of the most challenging places in Latin America for open and unrestricted Bible access.

THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN VENEZUELA

To adequately meet the spiritual needs of the local church in Venezuela, a significant number of Bibles are urgently required. This will address the scarcity that impacts not only individual believers but entire congregations that rely on limited or shared copies to hear and engage with Scripture.

A Declining Church in Need of God's Word

This need becomes even more urgent against the backdrop of a declining church. In the past five years, the number of actively engaged believers has decreased significantly. Rather than signaling a diminished need for Bibles, this drop reveals a church under intense pressure—caught between dictatorship, poverty, and criminal control.

The Bible remains one of the few lifelines for hope, resilience, and perseverance in the face of such systemic oppression. When a church is struggling to grow, the Word of God becomes all the more vital for spiritual sustenance and revival.

Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

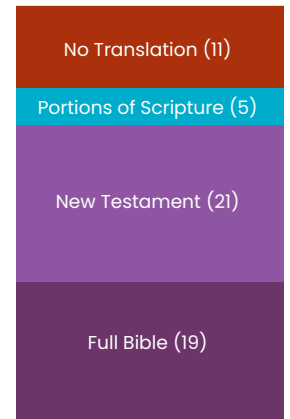
Print Bibles remain the top priority for Venezuelan Christians, especially in remote or impoverished regions where electricity and internet access are unreliable. **Digital formats** via the internet are growing in importance, but print remains essential for daily devotions, public reading in churches, and use in humanitarian outreach.

The Translation Gap

Christians in Venezuela speak at least 56 languages. Of these languages:

- Only **19** have translations of the full Bible
- **21** languages have only the New Testament
- **5** have only portions of Scripture translated
- **11 languages have no Scripture translation at all**

These gaps highlight entire communities who still wait to encounter the full story of redemption in their heart language.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Venezuela

THE CLARION CALL

This is an urgent call to the global Church: Venezuela is in crisis, but the Gospel is not in chains. The need for Bibles has never been more urgent. As believers face persecution from both the government and organized crime, the Word of God remains their greatest source of strength

Let us not delay. Now is the time to ensure every Venezuelan Christian has access to the Word that brings life, truth, and unshakable hope.

