



Niger

Republic of Niger

Africa

Geography

Area 1,186,408 sq km. Sahara desert in centre and north. Only the southwest and a narrow strip along the Nigerian border in the south are savannah grasslands.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	15,891,482	3.94%
2020	22,946,657	3.68%
2030	32,562,695	3.52%

Capital Niamey 1,047,686. **Urbanites** 16.7%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 50%. **Life expectancy** 50.8 yrs.

Peoples

Sub-Saharan African 89.4%.
Hausa 43.2%. Adarawa 39.1%; Mauri 3.3%; Kwarar 0.8%.
Songhai 29.3%. 5 groups. Zarma (Djerma) 23.9%; Koryaboro 4.6%.
Fulbe (Fulani) 10.4%. The more settled Sokoto 4.1%; the largely nomadic Wodaabe/Bororo 3.3% and Western Fulani 3.0%.
Kanuri-Saharan 4.8%. 8 peoples. Manga 2.6%; Yerwa 0.8%.
Gur 1.2%. Mossi 0.9%.
Other Africans 0.5%. Nigerians, Togolese, others.
Arab World 10.4%.
Arab 1.4%. Arabized Berber 1.2%; Moors, Lebanese, Shuwa nomads.
Tuareg/Tamacheq 9.0%. Six ethnic groups. Tahoua Tamacheq 4.4%; Arabized Tamacheq 2.0%; Air Tamacheq 1.7%.
Other 0.2%. French, others.

Literacy 28.7%. **Official language** French. Language of wider communication is Hausa. **All languages** 21. **Languages with Scriptures** 3Bi 4NT 9por 8wi.p.

Economy

One of the world's poorest nations and right near the bottom of the Human Development Index. Most people barely survive on subsistence agriculture and livestock. Droughts and locust plagues further devastate the already fragile economy. Possession of some of the world's largest uranium deposits should bring investment if the uranium market improves. Very dependent on aid and IMF loans.

HDI Rank 182nd/182. **Public debt** 67.9% of GDP. **Income/person** \$391 (1% of USA).

Politics

For centuries the Tuareg dominated much of the Sahel. French colonial rule 1921-1960. Military regimes with a number of coups. A brief period of democratic rule, 1993-96, presaged the democratic government formed in 1999. Yet another military coup in 2010 ousted the former president who had forced a change in the constitution, allowing himself to stay in power longer. There has been intermittent Tuareg insurgency in the north for some years.

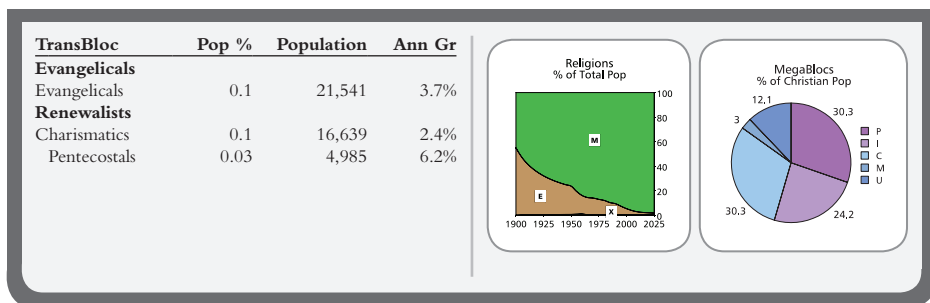
Religion

A non-confessional state with considerable freedom of religion and few restrictions on mission work. Tensions between Muslims and Christians have escalated due to the situation in Nigeria, the rise of fundamentalist Muslim groups in Niger and the less-than sensitive approaches of some Pentecostal groups.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	97.14	15,436,986	4.2%
Ethnoreligionist	2.50	397,287	-2.8%
Christian	0.33	52,442	2.1%
Baha'i	0.03	4,767	3.9%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	17	0.10	16,000	3.2%
Independent	19	0.08	13,000	1.4%
Catholic	1	0.10	16,000	0.0%
Marginal	1	0.01	1,000	0.9%
Unaffiliated		<0.01	6,000	3.7%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	16	8,466	16,000
Evangelical Ch (EERN)	P	100	1,200	6,000
Assemblies of God	P	30	1,738	3,650
Un of Ev Prot (UEEPN)	P	40	1,375	3,300
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	6	343	1,200
Abundant Life Church	I	30	575	1,150
Ev Chr Assem (ACEN)	I	12	408	1,020
Un of Bapt Chs (UEEB)	P	4	350	700
Other denominations[30]		89	7,945	13,625
Total Christians[38]		327	22,400	46,645



Answers to Prayer

- 1 **The establishment of groups of believers** among most of the peoples of Niger, including the Wodaabe/Bororo, Manga Kanuri, Zarma, Tuareg/Tamacheq, Songhai and others.
- 2 **Many churches have been planted** through the impact of humanitarian help by Christians in education, well-digging, agricultural development, leprosy control and health services.
- 3 **The Alliance of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Niger (AMEEN)** continues to develop as a united, visionary and cross-denominational organization.

Challenges for Prayer

- 1 **This Muslim land is open for the gospel**, and there is encouraging spiritual openness among its peoples. Still, Islam is pervasive, and groups with strict and aggressive interpretations of it are on the increase. Pray that the land may remain open for Christian mission, and that every social, religious and spiritual barrier to the knowledge of the Lord may be removed. The spiritual effects of folk Islam and demonic oppression are major hindrances to people coming to Christ.
- 2 **Christianity is growing**, but more slowly than the population overall; the same applies for evangelicals, who remain a tiny minority. People are coming into the Kingdom in a trickle; pray for the trickle to turn into a torrent. Positively, many previously unreached people groups now have their first believers, and pastors, who converted from Islam themselves, lead the majority of congregations. But social and cultural pressure to remain in or revert to Islam prevents many, who would otherwise do so, from following Christ. Pray for a critical mass of open, practicing Christians that begins larger people movements to Christ.
- 3 **Issues facing the church:**
 - a) **Many believers are isolated**, often illiterate and rarely have systematic Bible teaching available. Pray for literacy programmes as well as oral methods of learning scriptural truths and becoming disciples. Pray for groups to form, even if only very small, for the sake of those who need fellowship with other Christians.
 - b) **Unity is needed**. Despite the small size of the Church, a number of denominations have split. Pray for greater unity, especially through the work of AMEEN.
 - c) **Leadership training**. The EERN and UPEEN denominations run two middle-level Bible schools. Also, **SIM** and its five church partners operate a higher-level Bible school (ESPRiT) in Niamey. Many small Bible training schools and modular/TEE schools are run by different denominations, such as *Institute Biblique Baptist de Soir*. Pray for effective ways to train more leaders and to further train those currently in pastoral work.
 - d) **Educational needs** provide an opportunity for Christians to make a huge difference in Niger. The government cannot afford to educate all children, so many – especially girls – receive no schooling at all. Agencies such as **SIM**, Tearfund and World Horizons, as well as denominations such as

EERN, open and run schools that offer valuable education for primary-aged children and open doors for demonstrating the gospel. Pray for material and human resources to properly seize this opportunity.

4 This pioneer land still needs missionaries for all parts of the country. Loving ministry by Christian missionaries – working through aid, development, health and education – has won credibility for the gospel and increased interest and response from both Muslims and animists. Pray for more labourers. There is a growing contribution to missions by Nigeria and Brazil. Pray for sensitivity in helping small, young churches and their leaders to maturity.

5 Some of the least-reached peoples of Niger are particularly strategic for prayer:

- a) **The Tuareg/Tamacheq**, once rich, are now impoverished and resentful due to drought, famine, changing trade patterns and political changes. Holistic outreach and selfless ministry by workers from **SIM**, the Baptists, **JEMED/YWAM**, Sahara Desert Mission, Tearfund and others has seen the advent of several groups of believers. **SIM** and **SIL** workers are translating the Scriptures; the Tamacheq NT was published in 1991. Tuareg customs and their unique alphabet hint at a possible once-Christian heritage.
- b) **The Zarma** are Muslim but strongly influenced by traditional practices. Only a few hundred believers are known. Evangelical Baptist missionaries laboured long to produce a complete Bible translation and to plant several congregations.
- c) **The five Kanuri peoples** have a 1,000-year-long history of Islam. Though considered resistant to the gospel, they prove receptive to sensitive witness. Manga Christians have grown to a few congregations. They pray for their families and villages to believe, as natural social units, but also for the sake of security in the face of persecution. While Manga has only a few Scripture portions, Yerwa Kanuri has a complete NT and the **JESUS** film. Further translation as well as oral Scripture resources are vital, and some are in preparation (**SIM**, **SIL**).
- d) **The Fulbe** (Fulani), both the settled Sokoto and nomadic Wodaabe/Bororo Fulbe of the west and the less Islamized, nomadic Fulbe across the whole country. **SIM** has 10 workers committed to the Fulbe. The Wodaabe Church continues to grow, from 60 in 1991 to over 1,000 today. **IMB**, **AFM** and others work among the increasingly responsive Fulani peoples in Niger.
- e) **The Songhai**, a riverine people who once ruled an empire, have very few Christians among them, as few as 0.2%. **SIM**, **IMB** and some Brazilian workers reach out to the Songhai, a difficult task to a strongly Muslim people who regard converts as traitors.
- f) **The Tubu peoples** in the east. **SIL** is working on a translation for the Dazaga language, and several national workers minister among them.
- g) **Arab peoples**, including not only Arabized Berbers but also Moors and Libyans. **SIM** is preparing workers to reach out to them.

6 Young people are the most open and responsive, yet not enough has been done to reach this key sector of the nation. The fragile politico-economic situation often causes the universities to be closed, disrupting student ministries. **GBU(IFES)** operates groups in the university in Niamey and works in high schools in two other cities. The Navigators and **CCCI** also have ministries, and **SIM** runs an evangelistic student centre near the University of Niamey. Pray for a deep and lasting impact through campus ministries.

7 Pray for the specialist Christian ministries in Niger, including:

- a) **Aid and development projects** for one of the world's poorest countries should ideally uplift and then empower the people. Samaritan's Purse, Impacting Niger, WorldVision, Lutheran World Relief and many others try to invest wisely into the lives of the people by providing for their needs. Pray that such ministry by Christians would demonstrate the love of God and make an eternal difference in the lives of those impacted.
- b) **Medical ministry** is very effective in this deprived nation. **SIM** runs the Galmi hospital, and **TLM** runs the **SIM**-founded Danja hospital, which has the national referral centre for leprosy as well as an ophthalmic centre.
- c) **The many prostitutes in the capital** are the focus of a significant outreach by **CAPRO**. The problem of prostitution in southern Niger intensifies as shari'a law is enforced in northern Nigeria,

but a lack of funds and personnel threatens this crucial ministry.

8 Media-oriented ministries include:

- a) **Bible translation and distribution.** SIL and **SIM** workers commit to translation programmes in Tamacheq-Tawellemmet, Kanuri-Manga, Kanuri-Tumari, Fulbe (Fulfulde), Wodaabe and Tubu-Daza; there are active projects in eight different languages.
- b) **Christian literature.** Poverty and illiteracy are severe limitations. Literacy programmes must be a key aspect of development programmes, both Christian and secular. There are just two Christian bookstores in the country.
- c) **Radio** is a recent development in Christian ministry. EBM produces Christian programmes for the national radio station and a commercial station. A Christian FM station, *Radio Espoire*, launched in Niamey in 2004 and includes spiritually and socially redemptive programming in several languages. Words of Hope is involved in programme development and training.
- d) **The audio-media ministry** is inadequately funded and exploited. **GRN** has prepared messages in 36 languages/dialects of Niger. Solid-state audio and cassettes are vital in the contexts of poverty and nomadism.
- e) **The JESUS film** is now available in 11 languages.