

Mission Beyond our Borders (MBoB) Country Profile – March 2025

Focus on Sahel region of Africa.

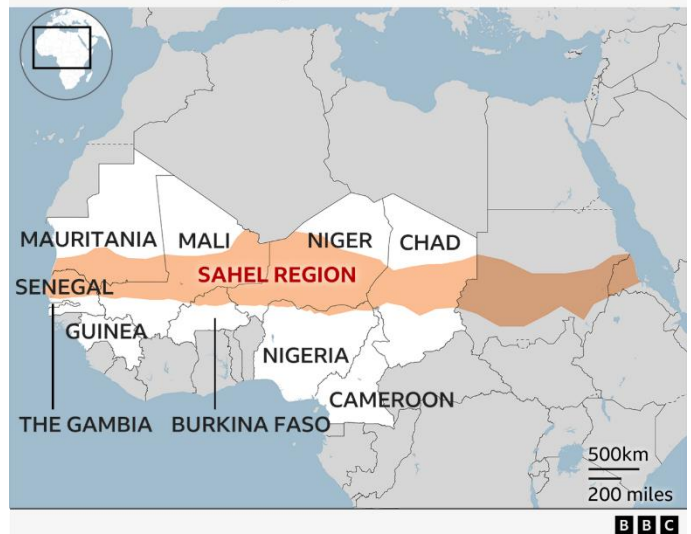
The Sahel stretches from the west coast of Africa eastwards across the continent and includes parts of 10 countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Guinea, The Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria, Chad and Mauritania

The Sahel region of Africa is the "epicentre of global terrorism" and now, for the first time, accounts for "over half of all terrorism-related deaths", according to the Global Terrorism Index. This means that in this region of Africa more people die from acts of terrorism than those in the whole of the rest of the world combined.

Most of the attacks in the Sahel were carried out by two organisations: the Islamic State group and JNIM - a branch of al-Qaeda. These are both Islamic organisations so what is happening to Christians here?

It is worth noting that most of these countries appear on the Open Doors Watch List of the top 50 countries where Christians are at threat of persecution. (See last month's MBoB profile).

Sahelian countries included in the Global Terrorism Index report



Nigeria. The majority of attacks are currently in the north of the country and most Christians live in the central and southern region. However, there are reports that attacks are escalating and spreading south where the majority of Christians live. Christians in the north of the country live under Sharia law.

Mali Jihadist violence is spreading southward. There have been two military take overs in the last few years contributing to insecurity. Christians make up just 2.5% of the population.

Burkina Faso Currently, the government only controls about half the country. Christians living in areas controlled by Islamist militants are most likely to face violence and pressure for their faith in Jesus.

Niger There is a tiny Christian community, but all citizens have affected by civil unrest and a military coup.

Cameroon Over 50% of the population are Christian but in the north militant Islamists are active and attacks against Christians and churches are unrelenting.

Guinea Currently, the small Christian minority and the missionary community have the freedom to share the Christian hope to a nation long plagued by poverty, corruption, and uncertainty.

The Gambia The small Christian church has more religious freedom here than in most Muslim countries but most Christian work has been on the coast. Few reach out to the Muslim majority inland.

Senegal Christians have religious freedom here, but the Muslim Sufi brotherhoods are organized, wealthy, and have political power. The few churches are largely based in the capital and don't reach into the countryside.

Chad About 38% of the population are Christians but rebels and bandits plague the nation from inside Chad but also from across the border. Conflict between the Muslim north and the more Christian south persists.

Mauritania There is a tiny Church. Mauritania is staunchly Islamic, Christian activities are severely restricted, making it difficult for Christians to express their faith; for converts, it's almost impossible.

Ideas for prayer:

- Wisdom for the governments and leaders of these nations to be able to tackle the violence having these debilitating effects across this wide area of Africa.
- For political stability in the region.
- That the international community would act in ways that assist national governments in the Sahel region to overcome the influence and activities people of violence.
- Protection for Christians and all people caught up in places where there is fear and distrust.
- Strengthen Christians that they will be confident to stand for their faith and be a support to one another in uncertain times.
- That leaders in the Christian communities are wise as they work to encourage their fellow Christians.