



Reaching the Nations International Church Growth Almanac

Country reports on the LDS Church around the world from a landmark almanac. Includes detailed analysis of history, context, culture, needs, challenges and opportunities for church growth.



Chad

Population: 11.41 millions (#77 out of countries)

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Geography

Area: 1,259,200 square km. Landlocked in Central Africa, Chad borders Sudan, the Central Africa Republic, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, and Libya. The Sahara Desert occupies the north, whereas the semi-arid Sahel occupies central Chad. The southernmost areas are tropical. Most of the terrain consists of low-lying plains, although there are some mountains in the northwest. Lake Chad forms the boundary with Cameroon and is rapidly shrinking due to desertification and diversion of tributary rivers for agriculture. Natural hazards include harmattan winds bringing hot, dusty air from the Sahara, and occasional droughts. Limited fresh water, pollution, and desertification are environmental issues. Chad is divided into twenty-three administrative regions.

Peoples

Sara: 30.5%

Kanembu/Bornu/Buduma: 9.8%

Arab: 9.7%

Wadai/Maba/Masalit/Mimi: 7.0%

Gorane: 5.8%

Masa/Musseye/Musgum: 4.9%

Bulala/Medogo/Kuka: 3.7%

Marba/Lele/Mesme: 3.5%

Mudang: 2.7%

Bidiyo/Migaama/Kenga/Dangleat: 2.5%

Dadjo/Kibet/Muro: 2.4%

Tupuri/Kera: 2.0%

Gabri/Kabalaye/Nanchere/Somrai: 2.0%

Fulani/Fulbe/Bodore: 1.8%

Karo/Zime/Peve: 1.3%

Baguirmi/Barma: 1.2%

Zaghawa/Bideyat/Kobe: 1.1%

Tama/Assongori/Mararit: 1.1%

Mesmedje/Massalat/Kadjakse: 0.8%

Other Chadian ethnic groups: 3.4%

Chadians of foreign ethnicity: 0.9%

Foreigners: 0.3%

Unspecified: 1.6%

High ethnic diversity exists, as the largest ethnic group constitutes less than one-third of the population. Central and southern Chad are the most populated regions, whereas northern arid areas have few inhabitants. Sara are a Sudanese ethnic group and reside in extreme southern Chad. Arabs mainly populate central and southeastern areas of the country. Other ethnic groups primarily live in central or southern Chad and are of Sudanese, Semitic or Hausa origin.

Population: 15,833,116 (July 2018)

Annual Growth Rate: 3.23% (2018)

Fertility Rate: 5.9 children born per woman (2018)

Life Expectancy: 55.7 male, 59.3 female (2018)

Languages: Arabic (9%), Ngambay (8%), Kanembu (5%), Dazaga (3%), Naba (3%), Fulani dialects (2%), Maba (2%), Mundang (2%), Musey (2%), other (66%). French and Arabic are official languages and widely spoken as second languages. One hundred thirty-one native languages are spoken. Only Chadian Arabic (1.44) and Ngambay (1.32 million) have one million or more native speakers.

Literacy: 22.3% (2016)

History

Modern-day Chad has been inhabited for thousands of years. Islam arrived in northern Chad before 1000 AD, and southern expansion did not occur. The French colonized the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and gave greater autonomy to Chad following World War II. Independence from France was achieved in 1960. For the following thirty years, Chad endured civil war and war with neighboring Libya. Democratic elections held in the 1990s were deemed flawed by international observers. Conflict between the government and rebel groups in northern Chad occurs frequently, particularly in the Tibesti area. In the mid-2000s, rebel groups in Sudan began attacks on Chad's eastern border, and civil conflict escalated. The capital N'djamena has come under threat from rebel forces from time to time from rebel forces. In the 2010s, Boko Haram launched terrorist attacks in the Lake Chad area.

Culture

Chad is divided north to south between Muslim and Christian/Animist peoples. A third of Chadian women are influenced by polygamy. Female genital mutilation is a serious problem; an estimated half of women have been victims of the practice. Government banned the practice in 2002, although it continues in many areas. The treatment of women and cultural restrictions vary based on location.^[1] The most widely eaten food is millet. Soccer is the most popular sport. Alcohol consumption rates are lower than most countries.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$2,300 (2017) [3.85% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.401 (2018)

Corruption Index: 19 (2018)

Agriculture drives the economy. Chad's landlocked position and high governmental corruption hamper greater economic development and diversification. Nearly half of the population lives below the poverty line and most Chadians sustain themselves on subsistence farming and herding. Primary agriculture products include cotton, sorghum, and millet. The primary industry is oil production, cotton, and brewing. American and Chinese oil companies arrived in the 2000s and began extracting the oil reserves. Primary trade partners include the United States, China, Cameroon, France, and the Netherlands.

Chad is ranked as one of the most corrupt nations worldwide, and corruption can be found in all levels on government. Recent oil exploration and extraction has exacerbated corruption and inequality in wealth. There has been no improvement with reducing corruption in Chad in the past decade.

Faiths

Muslim: 52.1%

Christian: 44.1%

Animist: 0.3%

None: 2.8%

Unspecified: 0.7%

Christians

Denominations – Members – Congregations

Roman Catholic – 3,166,623

Evangelicals – 1,161,358

Seventh Day Adventists – 3,172 – 64

Jehovah's Witnesses – 887 – 19

Latter-day Saints – less than 20

Religion

Muslims and Christians each account for approximately half of the population. Muslims typically reside in northern areas, whereas Christians populate southern and urban areas. Christians are almost evenly divided between Protestants and Roman Catholics, albeit Protestants have recently surpassed Catholics in the number of adherents. Chadians following indigenous beliefs primarily reside in the south.

Religious Freedom

The constitution allows for religious freedom, which is respected by the government. Chad has no official religion, but the government has historically shown favoritism towards Islam. Some radical Muslim groups are banned. Religious groups must register with the government and maintain peaceful coexistence with other faiths. Religious instruction is not allowed in public schools.[\[2\]](#)

Largest Cities

Urban: 23.3% (2019)

N'Djamena, Moundou, Sarh, Abeche, Kelo, Koumra, Pala, Am Timan, Bongor, Mongo.

None of the ten most populous cities have a congregation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Twelve percent (12%) of the national population lives in the ten most populous cities.

Church History

In 1998, Chad was included in the Africa West Area. One of the first Chadian members, Toupta Boguena, was baptized in Arizona in 1997 and returned to Chad in 2003. At the time, she was the only member in N'djamena, and the closest member

was an American working in southern Chad in Doba.[\[3\]](#) In 2011, the Church organized the Africa West Area Branch to service Chad and nine additional countries within the Africa West Area that were unassigned to missions. As of year-end 2013, the Church appeared to have less than 20 members in Chad.[\[4\]](#)

Membership Growth

Church Membership: less than 20 (2019)

In 2003, only two members likely lived in the country. In 2019, Church membership appeared less than twenty.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 0 (2019)

Members worship in the privacy of their own homes and are too few and spread apart to justify Sunday meetings. The responsibility for Church affairs in Chad falls under the Africa West Area presidency.

Activity and Retention

No converts appear to have been baptized in Chad.

Language Materials

Languages with Latter-day Saint Scripture: Arabic, French.

The Church has all Church scriptures and most materials available in Arabic and French. Gospel Principles and The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith are available in two Fulani languages (Fula and Futa).

Meetinghouses

No Church meetings occur.

Health and Safety

HIV/AIDS infects 1.3% of the population. Common methods of infection include illicit sexual relations, drug use, contaminated needles, and HIV-positive mothers. However, HIV is not spread by casual contact and is not likely to prevent the Church's establishment.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted sixteen humanitarian and development projects in Chad, including refugee and emergency

response, and community projects.^[5] Since 2003, Toupta Boguena, a Chadian scholar and BYU graduate, has organized relief and development projects under “The Chad Project.” Most of the members of the organization reside in Utah and ship farming equipment, seeds, water pumps, wheelchairs, medical equipment, and school kits to distribute in villages. Toupta Boguena also teaches at the University of N’jamena.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church’s absence in Chad is likely not due to the Church’s failure to obtain recognition, as registration has likely not been pursued because so few members live in the country. Distance from the nearest Church centers, poverty, and political instability have also appeared to deter a Church establishment.

Cultural Issues

Widespread poverty, insurgencies, and ethnic conflicts have likely discouraged the Church from more actively pursuing missionary work in Chad. Those wishing to join the Church engaged in a polygamous marriage must end these relations in divorce and be interviewed by a member of the mission or area presidency. Widespread female mutilation practices oppose Church teachings. Extremely low literacy rates presents major challenges for gospel study, testimony building, and leadership training.

National Outreach

Chad’s remote location challenges mission outreach. Chad has never fallen under the jurisdiction of a mission. Rebel forces in northern and eastern Chad would keep many regions unreached by the Church once established in N’jamena. Outreach in the larger cities and in southern Chad appears most favorable for future missionary opportunities due to larger Christian populations and greater stability. The assignment of Chad to the Africa West Area Branch provides a method for area leadership to keep track of isolated members and prepare for the organization of member groups in locations with sufficient membership to warrant Church meetings in member homes or rented spaces.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity and doctrinal understanding of members in Chad likely depend on the quality of teaching received in the country where they joined the Church and gospel habits developed prior to relocating to Chad.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The Church will likely experience ethnic integration issues early in its establishment in Chad due to the high ethnic diversity. Ethnic groups in the same congregation that have traditional ties to differing religious and cultural practices will likely cause the most friction. These issues may impact member activity and convert retention rates if early conflicts are not promptly addressed.

Language Issues

Chad’s language diversity challenges future Church outreach, as most Chadians only have Church materials in their second

language. Arabic-speaking Chadians will likely be less receptive to the Church, as most adhere to Islam. French will likely be used in meetings and for teaching investigators.

Leadership

No native leadership likely resides in Chad. The establishment of congregations and long-term Church growth will hinge of the conversion of Chadian men and their consistency in attending meetings and following Church teachings.

Temple

Chad does not appear to be assigned to a specific temple. The Aba Nigeria Temple is the closest temple to Chad. No temple trips are organized.

Comparative Growth

The African nation with a Church presence that shares the most similarities with Chad is the Central African Republic. The Central African Republic has seen very little progress since the first congregations were organized almost three decades ago. This may indicate that future outreach in Chad may yield some initial results but face little growth and expansion due to geographic isolation and many complex government, social, and religious issues. Most nations in the region have no Church presence and few to no Latter-day Saints.

Other Christian denominations have experienced slow growth in Chad in recent years. Jehovah's Witnesses have reported almost stagnant growth in the past decade. Seventh-day Adventists experienced slow growth during the 2010s. Missionary-focused Christian groups usually operate in larger cities and in the south. Many of these denominations have had a presence in Chad for decades.

Future Prospects

The Church in West Africa has seen increasing outreach and expansion into neighboring nations, but prospects for future Church establishment in Chad appeared unfavorable in early 2020. Insurgencies and widespread poverty challenge missionary efforts. Very few Chadians have joined the Church abroad, which has created challenges for the Church to establish itself in Chad. Once greater stability is established, Chad appears a likely candidate for more widespread Church-sponsored humanitarian and development work starting in the southern regions. Such efforts can aim at improving quality of life of Chadians, establishing good terms with the government, and preparing the way for a future Church presence.

[1] "Chad," Social Institutions and Gender Index, retrieved 12 March 2010. <http://genderindex.org/country/chad>

[2] "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom: Chad." U.S. Department of State. Accessed 2 January 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/chad/>

[3] Heaps, Julie Dockstader. "Fulfilling a promise to her father," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48594/Fulfilling-a-promise-to-her-father.html>

[4] "Prospective LDS Outreach in Chad." www.cumorah.com. 28 April 2014. https://cumorah.com/index.php?target=view_case_studies&story_id=224&cat_id=6

[5] "Where We Work." Latter-day Saint Charities. Accessed 2 January 2020. <https://www.latterdaysaintcharities.org/where-we-work>