



**Pray for
Somalia**

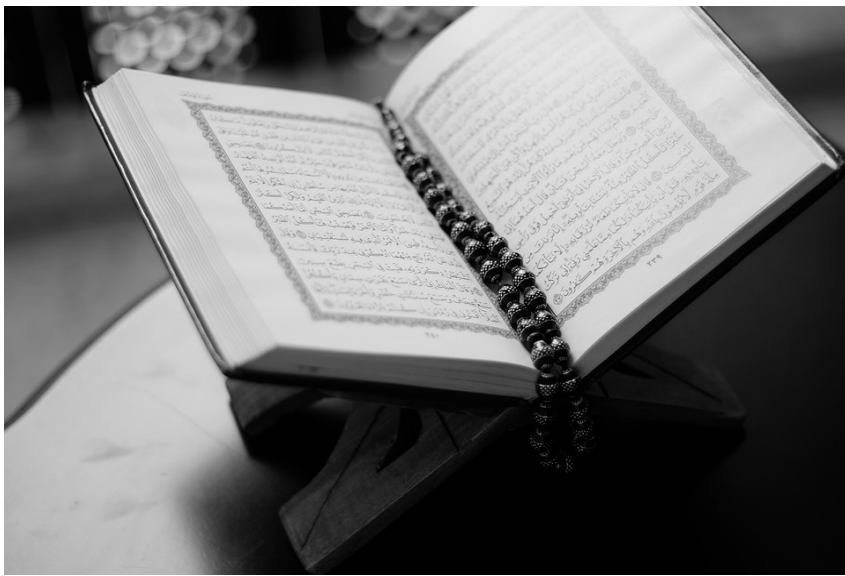
MUSLIMS

Religion is a major influence on the lives of Somalis. More than 99% of Somalis are Muslim, most of them Sunni Muslim. Sharia law is the law of the land. Somalis mix Muslim teaching and tradition with Sufi spiritualism which is characterized by chanting, whirling, chewing khat, and falling into a trance as a way to commune with Allah.

Most Somalis also believe in mortal spirits called jinn, who are said to be descended from fallen heavenly spirits. These jinn can be good or evil. They are believed to cause misfortune and illness, marital problems, infertility and death. These jinn are fought by specialists in ceremonies that resemble exorcisms.

Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group linked to al-Qaeda, is fighting to take over Somalia and impose a stricter form of Sharia law. In areas where al-Shabaab is in power women are stoned for adultery and thieves have their hands cut off.





pray

Pray to the One True God:

- To break the power of Satan and tear down spiritual strongholds in Somalia. (Ephesians 6:12)
- That Somalis will know the truth and be set free. (John 8:32)
- To raise up workers to fight the lies of Satan with the truthful speech and the power of God. (II Corinthians 6:7)
- To reveal Himself to Muslim believers in dreams and visions. (Acts 2:17)

BELIEVERS

Throughout Somalia Christians face isolation and persecution. In the areas where Al Shabaab is active, anyone even suspected of leaving Islam is publically executed. In all areas, including Somaliland where the constitution confirms freedom of religion, it is illegal to proselytize, and Sharia law does not recognize the right to convert from Islam.

At the very least Christians face exclusion from the family and community. At the worst, they face torture and death. Open Doors ranks Somalia second only to North Korea for the systemic and intense persecution of Christians. Operation World reports that an infant Somali Church is emerging amid great tribulation.

pray

Ask the Lord of Lords and King of Kings:

- To give the believers boldness to proclaim His Word. (Acts 4:29)
- To protect those who trust in His name. (Psalm 91:14)
- To comfort believers in their troubles. (II Corinthians 1:4)
- To watch over His children. (Psalm 121:8)
- To help persecuted believers to experience joy in their trials and learn perseverance and become mature. (James 1:2-4)
- To give His Somali children patient endurance. (James 5:7-11)

FAMILIES

Family is the core of Somali society and the focus of the culture. The family is more important than the individual. Single adults continue to live with the family until marriage. Family resources are pooled in order to survive difficult times. Somalis who go away to school live with family in the new place rather than living alone. When a woman gets married she leaves her family to join her husband's family. Polygamy is common.

But this central fabric of society and culture is deteriorating. Families are torn apart as men and even boys are conscripted to fight and families flee violence or are evicted from their homes. Divorce is more and more common. (By law it must always be initiated by the husband.) Many children live with only one parent. Many others have been orphaned by the war.

pray

Pray to the Father:

- To place the lonely in families. (Psalm 68:6)
- To be a father to the fatherless and a defender of widows. (Psalm 68:5)
- To call Somalis to Himself and make them part of His household. (Ephesians 2:19)
- That Somali men would come to know Jesus and lead their families in serving the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

VIOLENCE & INSE

Car bombings, suicide bombings and gun battles in the streets continue to characterize Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, as the extremist group Al-Shabaab fights to gain control of the city and the country. The Somali government fights to maintain control of Mogadishu and regain control of various regions of the country from local clans, war-lords and Al-Shabaab.

Innocent civilians continue to suffer throughout the war-torn land. Fighting by Al-Shabaab forces, government forces and local clans to control resources and gain political power result in multiple civilian casualties in many areas of the country. There are stories of women and children being raped, and children being forced to fight not only by Al-Shabaab, but by government forces as well. Over one million civilians have been displaced within the country facing serious abuses and having limited access to basic resources. Almost one million live in refugee camps in surrounding countries and have for almost 30 years.

Isaiah 64:1-2

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!

As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,

come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!

SECURITY

Isaiah 51:3

The LORD will surely comfort Zion
and will look with compassion on all her ruins;
he will make her deserts like Eden,
her wastelands like the garden of the LORD.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of singing

pray

Ask the Lord of Hosts:

- To defend the weak and fatherless, uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed, rescue the weak and needy, and deliver them from the hands of the wicked. (Psalm 82:3-4)
- To be a refuge for the oppressed and a stronghold in the time of trouble. (Psalm 9:9)
- To let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never failing stream across the land to all the people. (Amos 5:24)
- To reveal Himself as the Prince of Peace to the those who have known no peace in their lives. (Isaiah 9:6)
- To raise up and empower leaders who will administer true justice, and show true mercy and compassion. (Zechariah 7:9)
- To send those who will announce the peace found only in Christ and proclaim the happiness of living under God's reign. (Isaiah 52:7)

THE KHAT EPIDEMIC

In his book *The Insanity of God*, Nik Ripken reports seeing trucks and armed guards in starving Mogadishu being surrounded by people. He assumed that food and water had finally arrived. He then watched in horror as people traded whatever they could find to buy khat.

Khat is a plant whose leaves and stems are chewed to produce a feeling of well-being and excitement. It can be bought on the street anywhere in Somalia. Its use is pervasive among all social groups and classes including children.

Khat is destroying the health and economy of Somalia. Many farmers cultivate khat instead of food because they can produce two crops per year of khat rather than one crop of grain. Khat use leaves people penniless and often unable to work. Long term use can lead to permanent mental illness. Khat use has been linked to increased gang violence.

pray

Pray to the Desire of the Nations:

- That Somalis will seek God who will satisfy their desires with good things. (Psalm 103:5)
- To set the Somali people free from the power of khat. (Romans 6:7)
- To disarm the power of addiction that grips the Somali people. (Colossians 2:15)
- To rescue the Somali people from the dominion of darkness and bring them into the Kingdom of Jesus. (Colossians 1:13)

MYTHOLOGY & POETRY

Somalis have a rich story telling tradition. At feasts, the men tell myths from the time before Islam came to Somalia. These stories include gods, legendary kings and queens, giants, and evil spirits. Family stories are also told and passed down, mostly about heroic acts of ancestors.

Somalis are also known for a passionate love for and facility with poetry. Somalia has been referred to as a “Nation of Poets.” Many Somalis can recite poetry that is centuries old. Since the Somali language has only had an official alphabet since 1972, the most common way of experiencing Somali poetry is through listening rather than reading.

This strong oral tradition makes the telling of Bible stories a good way to bring the Gospel to the people of Somalia.

pray

Ask our Heavenly Father:

- To make known among the Somali people the great things He has done. (Psalm 126:3)
- To send gifted storytellers to proclaim the story of God to the Somali people. (Psalm 118:7)
- To empower and embolden Somali believers to tell their story of redemption to their family and friends. (Psalm 107:2)
- To make the story of God part of the story of Somalia that is passed down from generation to generation. (Joel 1:3)

CHILDREN

Somali children live in one of 10 poorest countries in the world where almost 45% of the population lives in extreme poverty. Many children are among the almost 1 million Somalis living in refugee camps in neighboring countries. Many more are among the 1.1 million who are displaced inside the country. More than 300,000 children under the age of five are acutely malnourished, and 1.7 million children are out of school.

Beyond the daily struggle to stay alive in a land that lacks basic resources, Somali children also face the horrors of war. Children have been orphaned, raped or murdered by Al Shabaab or government forces. Others die as a consequence of eviction from their homes by Al Shabaab or government troops.

Young boys are at high risk of being recruited to fight in the war. Others are kidnapped and forced to become child soldiers. It is estimated that as many as 5000 children, some as young as 10 years, are fighting for Al Shabaab. In the past, the Somali government forces have been criticized by the UN for using child soldiers.





pray

Ask the Good Shepherd:

- To defend the afflicted, save the children of the needy and crush the oppressor. (Psalm 72:4)
- That the Somali children will be taught by the Lord and that they would know peace (Isaiah 54:13)
- To call forth praises from the lips of the Somali children. (Matthew 21:16)

Isaiah 61:1-4

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor.



Team Expansion

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