

Monday 25th March

Chad

Pop: 15.6 million

Muslim: 57%

Chad is a land-locked country with Libya to the north, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon to the west, Central African Republic to the south and Sudan to the west. It is divided into three physical regions; the desert to the north, the dry Sahel region in the middle and the more fertile savannah zone in the south.



Chad is home to over 15.6 million people, within which are 120 different people groups. Of these, 77 are unreached and 31 are unengaged as well as unreached. This means Chad has more unreached people living within its borders than any other African country. Not only is it divided by people groups but also by language; there are 130 different languages. Even Arabic, one of their trade languages, has 30 different dialects.

Chad is also a very poor country. It has a lack of natural resources and 80% of Chadians are engaged in subsistence farming. There are some reserves of gold, uranium and oil which gives them the potential to develop a much-needed infrastructure in the country, but this remains inadequate.

Unfortunately, many of Chad's resources and much of its focus has been on fighting, both on its borders with Sudan, Niger and the Central African Republic, and with Islamist rebel groups. The UN estimates that more than two million people have been displaced by the crisis in the Lake Chad region in western Chad, as a result of violent conflict, climate change and extreme poverty. The leaders of Chad, Nigeria, Niger and the Central African Republic recently met in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, to discuss the worsening security situation in areas under attack by Boko Haram militants.

As fighting continues, many of the better educated have left the country instead of staying to help develop it. All this has meant that educational and medical facilities have not been developed. The majority Muslim population lives mainly in the inhospitable north and east and Christians who make up almost 40% of the population, live in the south. There is often animosity between the Muslims and local Christians. As in Ethiopia, fear of Muslims often means local believers do not reach out to them with the gospel message. This is why gospel workers continue to go to this country.

One of the growing problems in this country is the number of prostitutes and street children. They too are in desperate need of hope and the Good News.

- Pray for Chad to find resources that will raise their level of wealth and provide jobs for many including for the better educated so that they stay and help develop their country.
- Pray for efforts to reach each of Chad's unreached and unengaged people groups with the gospel of peace.
- Pray for the vulnerable, especially prostitutes and street children, for God's mercy upon them and for the Holy Spirit to draw them to Himself and for the right believers to reach them.

- Pray for angelic protection over the borders of this nation.

“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”

John 12:46

Source: Global Prayer Digest <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/chad-a-tapestry-of-diversity/>

Tuesday 26th March

Vision for Chad

“You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.”

Isaiah 62:3

Chad has been at peace with neighbouring countries but is now seeing trouble on its borders. The present leader, Idriss Deby, has been in power since 1990, but he is facing strong opposition and there have been several coup attempts. Neighbouring countries house Chadian rebels who then invade Chad, since they want to overthrow the president. A rebel Chadian coalition called the Union of Forces of Resistance says it was behind a recent incursion from Libya.



Idriss Deby

While Idriss Deby's long-term leadership has led to some charges of corruption and criticism, including putting his clan before his country, he has brought much-needed stability to the country. His ruling Muslim tribe is secular and his leadership is open to long-term gospel workers coming into the country. In the last ten years, there has been a great influx of foreign missionaries. Indeed Chad is one of the few Muslim nations that welcomes gospel workers. They believe that God has opened the door for other workers to come at this time, when many Muslims living there are craving to hear the Good News.

Chad can be likened to an island – a stable open country, surrounded by neighbouring unstable countries in crisis. It remains a place of refuge. At Frontiers we heard from a contact in Chad, of 3 Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) who were brought before the Sultan of their tribe and told they would be executed in 3 days' time if they did not recant their Christian faith. The Government intervened and said the Sultan was not allowed to do this, so sparing their lives.

MBBs are also able to go to neighbouring countries such as Sudan, where they disciple, train, encourage and equip local believers.

This openness brings incredible opportunities, as believers witness to unreached people groups and refugees from all the neighbouring countries. Although in the past thirty years Islam has increased, along with concerns that religious freedoms may disappear, today, praise God, Chad is a country where the gospel message can be heard and spread abroad.

- Praise God for blessing Chad as a place of light and refuge to the countries around it. Pray for national stability, peace on its borders and for a movement to Christ in Chad that will spread out to neighbouring countries bringing life and hope.

- We thank God for the leadership in Chad who welcome gospel workers to their country. Pray for a blessing on Idriss Deby and his government and that they will be open to the gospel message and one day confess Jesus as Lord.
- Pray for much fruit from this amazing opportunity to witness to refugees and unreached Muslims.

Wednesday 27th March

Influence of the Church and Christian schools in Chad

Church

Next year Chad is celebrating 100 years since the gospel came to this country in 1920. Today Chad has a good church presence, but faces many challenges.

Unity is being broken within the Church due to growing division between tribes. Unification and reconciliation are desperately needed.

Muslim background believers suffer from a lack of proper discipleship. This is exacerbated by the lack of resources in their own language. Of the 130 languages in Chad, 90 do not have any Scripture or Bible translation in their language.

Fortunately, in the south of the country where more believers live, there is a thriving Christian church and community. Southerners are often more educated than Muslims in the north and so are often sent there as teachers, doctors, nurses and civil servants where they then plant churches. If they can learn Arabic or tribal languages and if they catch a vision to reach those around them, these churches, and there are dozens of them, are well placed strategically to impact the community around them.

Christian schools

Christian schools are flourishing in Chad. There are approximately 200 Christian schools and over 50 of them are in the Muslim north. Muslim children make up 90-95% of the pupils. Muslim families send their children to Christian schools because the education is good and they respect the Christian church. This gives an amazing opportunity to impact the next generation, as Muslim children and their families are involved with the church community and hear the gospel stories.

- Let's ask God to break down tribal divisions and bring unity in the church.
- Pray for the church to be bold in its witness in the South, but particularly to take advantage of the opportunities in the north. May MBBs have a love and a jealousy for their people to know God.
- Pray for acceleration in Bible translation work, so more resources in the best available form are available to the church and Muslim UPGs.
- Pray for what God will do through Christian schools as Muslim children attending grow up on Christian principles and pray for their families who made that choice to send their children there. Let's pray for Muslim families to be open and receptive to hearing the truth.

Thursday 28th March

Surbakol people **Pop: 18,000** **Muslim: 99.9%**

A herd of cattle grazed on the grassy field in Chad. A young Surbakol man stood watch over the herd. He gazed to the east and was relieved not to see a cloud of dust. That meant there were no cattle rustlers heading in his direction. Then he gazed up at the clear blue sky and frowned. The lack of clouds meant there wouldn't be any rain soon. His cattle were running out of grass and it needed more rain to grow.

Surbakol is the name for both a people group and a language. The Surbakol people live in eastern Chad near the border with Sudan. A dozen years ago there was heavy fighting in Sudan and cattle rustlers often crossed the border to steal the cows that belonged to the Surbakols. Though the fighting has stopped, the Ouaddaï Region where they live is close to Darfur, where fighting can erupt at any time.

Drought is the other problem faced by this people group. Farmers and livestock herders alike have trouble making a living in this region. Water wells are few and far between in this part of Chad. One way to reach out and bless them is through the provision of hand pumps. We have heard of gospel workers drilling and installing hand pumps for villagers, who otherwise had to walk miles to collect water.

The Surbakol are Muslims. They also believe in numerous spirit beings which they believe have the power to bless or curse them on a daily basis. There are followers of Jesus among them, but they are few. They are classified as unreached and unengaged.

- Let's ask God to raise up faithful workers to reach out to the Surbakol people.
- There is an open door for engineers and people who know how to design and drill water wells. Let's pray for such workers to come to serve these people and share the blessings of the Saviour.
- Let's ask God to sustain the Surbakol "by the mighty power of His command." (Heb1:3).

Source: <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/issue/day/surbakol-people/>
<http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Surbakhal>

Friday 29th March

Mimi **Pop: 82,000** **Muslim: 100%**

It is believed that the Mimi originated in the Nile Valley of Egypt and migrated west in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some settled in the Biltine region in eastern Chad just north of Abeche where they became farmers. Others became nomadic herdsmen. The settled Biltine group, or Mimi, still speak their ancestral language, Amdang. The nomadic Mimi eventually adopted the Arabic language as their mother tongue.

The Mimi in Chad are mostly settled farmers who inhabit the hilly eastern part of Dar Mimi. Dar Mimi is sandy and virtually treeless. There they raise cereals, beans, sesame and a variety of other

crops; they also keep some livestock. Because of the shortage of water in the area, the settled Mimi are limited in the number of animals they can keep. For this reason, they tend to force the nomadic Mimi to migrate southward and westward. They are surrounded on all sides by a number of other ethnic groups.

Like so many others in Chad, they need more educational opportunities and quality health care facilities.

At Frontiers we have heard of a worker who is piloting a media project producing health and education messages by video and audio in a local language and distributing them through the recent boom in smartphone ownership. This is a much needed resource for the Mimi people if it could be made available in their language.

The Mimi are entirely Muslim and classified as unreached. They have probably never heard the gospel message and there are no Christian resources available to them. The Scriptures need to be made available in their languages and Christian broadcasts need to be aired in their regions so that they will hear the message of salvation.

- Pray that God will call Christian teachers and medical workers to minister to the Mimi in Chad.
- Let's pray for media projects that produce resources in their language.
- Pray that many from this people group will open hearts to receive the words of Jesus.

Source of some material: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10289/CD

Saturday 30th March

With Shouts of Joy

The following story is from a Frontiers' worker in Northeast Africa and reflects what life is like for workers in countries like Chad.

I met Amira shortly after moving to a new town in our host country, a nation in the desert in northeast Africa that my husband and I have called home for many years.



Amira is an energetic, Muslim-background woman who loves Jesus. She visits a Muslim village several hours away every month and spends a week there teaching women to read and write in the local trade language. Most of the women speak very little of the trade language and Amira, who belongs to a different tribe, doesn't speak their language. She has tried sharing the

gospel with them, but the language barrier limits their conversations.

One day when I bumped into Amira and she asked, "When are you coming to the village with me? You'd be such a huge help since you speak their language so well."

My husband and I had been studying the language for many years, but the reality was that I didn't want to go. I'd never really enjoyed trips to villages and as a mother with a toddler and a baby, I reasoned that my responsibilities at home made these trips out of the question. Besides, it'd be hard to wash my three-month-old's nappies with a limited supply of water that had to be drawn by hand from a well in the desert. And I could list countless things that could go wrong on a trip to a desert village with an infant.

But Amira insisted. "Bring your baby," she said. "She'll be fine!"

"Soon," I said, trying to put it off. "But I couldn't go for a whole week. I'd only stay for a day or so."

Week after week, Amira continued asking me to join her. Finally, worn down by her persistence, I agreed to go on a four-day trip. And so, early one morning, we climbed into a little bush taxi Amira had hired to take us to the village—where God surprised me with something unlike anything I'd ever seen in the country.

On our first day, Amira and I met with each class and had opportunities to share God's story from creation to the resurrection. The women came alive as they listened. They couldn't get enough of the Good News and kept asking us for more. I'd never seen such openness to the gospel.

Our hosts—a village elder named Ibrahim and his family—were just as spiritually hungry. Every morning and evening, Ibrahim and his wife joined us as we read from the Bible and prayed together. Their hearts were open and they heard God's Word with joy.

At the end of the four days, Ibrahim and the other villagers told me to come back soon. "And next time, you and your child will stay a month," the women teased me. I laughed with them and silently hoped they wouldn't be disappointed if there wasn't a next time.

Back home as I caught up on piles of washing and cuddles with my toddler, I thought; "Well, God was really gracious. That went really well with a baby. But I think I've done all that can be expected at the moment."

When Amira told me about her plans for the next trip and invited me to come with her, I shook my head. "But say hello to everyone for me," I told her.

The night before she left, I sensed God say to me, "your work in the village is not done yet."

The next thing I knew, I was back in the village, sitting in the desert heat with my baby, asking an eager audience of women if they'd like to hear more of God's story. They said yes and for the next several hours, Amira and I shared more about the Good News of the Kingdom with them.

I smiled and marvelled as women in Amira's literacy classes stood up and read John 3:16 for themselves.

I praised God when we heard about an Islamic teacher living nearby who was reading recently translated books of the Bible with a group of Muslim men every evening.

And I rejoiced again as we discovered that not only did our friends in this village desire to hear about Jesus the Messiah; people in surrounding villages were also asking for someone to come and tell them about the Kingdom.

One of our evenings in the village, Amira said to me, "Every time I am here, I am full of joy."

It was exactly how I felt, too. God's presence was with us. Even when I struggled with my baby's needs and the lack of clean water, I found myself rejoicing. The seeds of the Word were taking root and growing, and I felt like the psalmist who wrote:

"Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad." (Psalm 126:2-3)

"You will leave our village jumping and shouting with joy," our host Ibrahim stated on our last trip. He's right. The Lord God is doing great things in this village and beyond.

- We rejoice that Muslim men and women are beginning to embrace Jesus Christ and the Good News of the Kingdom. Let's pray for this to continue and ripple out even further among the unreached in Chad.
- We thank God for MBBs such as Amira, who long to reach other Muslims with the gospel message. Let's ask God to continue to fill her with His joy and His presence and for the seed she sows to *"fall on good soil, where it produces a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."* Matt:13:8
- We praise God for the faithfulness of all gospel workers, prepared to go despite the discomfort and trials. Let's ask for God's blessing on them and their families.