

## Toubou

The Toubou—"people of Tibesti"—trace their heritage back to Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula. They are divided into two subgroups, the Teda to the north, and the Daza to the south. Historically, they've been camel-herding nomads in the Sahara Desert. Due to famine and drought, some of the Toubou have begun to settle in towns, although many are still involved with caravans transporting salt, dates and other goods.



### Location

The Toubou live in the country of Niger.

### Culture

The Toubou have been referred to as the "strangest tribe inhabiting the Sahara." Traditionally they are desert warriors who used to control the caravan routes and were known for plundering and kidnapping slaves. The Toubou widely accept and practice revenge killing.

*Toubou Marriage:* Polygamy is permitted up to the Muslim limit of four wives, but is relatively rare in Tibesti. Co-wives usually come from different bands and occupy separate dwellings. In most cases, they live in different localities.

*Toubou Dress:* Traditionally, Toubou men wear pants with long robes and a turban. The women wear short pants with multi-colored wraps.

### Government

The Toubou give alliance to Dardai, the paramount chief, who is selected in rotation from four noble Tomaghers patrilineal lineages and assisted by a council of elders. The Dardai, who wears a turban as a symbol of his office, has little authority and collects no taxes.

### SIM Involvement

SIM began work in 1924 at Zinder, Niger and now ministers in 15 locations. In the early 1970s, a group of Catholic Sisters lived among the Toubou. In 1994, three different missions, including SIM, began outreach to the Toubou. Translators and church planters from several missions are committed to reaching the Toubou.

The Toubou are heavily influenced by folk Islam—a mixture of traditional Islam and animism—and have not been receptive to the gospel. Only a few scattered believers and no organized churches exist among the Toubou. Social pressures from Islam and their remote geographic location create challenges to hearing and understanding God's gift of life for them.

### Scripture Availability

Today, the Toubou language remains unwritten. Linguists living among the Toubou are developing a written system of language, and then Scripture translation can begin. Gospel cassettes in Teda, a dialect from the far north, are available, but their quality needs upgrading.

## Urgent Prayer Need

Bingham Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, urgently needs a [French teacher](#) to join their staff team in August. Pray that God will provide the right person to meet this need.