

PEOPLE GROUP:

THE IDAKSAHAK OF ALGERIA AND MALI

The Idaksahak (“Sons of Isaac”) or Dawsahak or Daoussahak are of the Berber peoples, the diverse ethnic groups who lived in North Africa before the Arabs arrived. They moved south in the eighth or ninth century, bringing Islam with them, and now inhabit the northeast part of Mali and a small section of southeast Algeria.

For many years, the Idaksahak performed a Maraboutic function for the Tuareg, carrying out religious duties for their nobility, which meant they were not allowed to take up arms and therefore depended on the Tuareg for protection. They were traditionally herders for the Tuareg, who are also Berber peoples, and there is some intermarriage between the groups. The Idaksahak are now a mix of pastoralists and seasonal nomads, herding goats, cattle and camels over a wide area, with some living in towns.

This part of Africa has been prone to outbreaks of violence in recent years, and the Idaksahak have joined with the Tuareg in cattle theft and plunder against the Fulani tribes, who have retaliated in kind. The conflicts are complicated and have gone on for generations, involving a variety of groups. The problems only worsen with decreasing lands for grazing livestock.

The Idaksahak have been Sunni Muslims for over 1,000 years and remain unreachable. There are no Scriptures at all in their language, Tadaksahak (Dausahaq), besides some Bible stories and messages recorded by the Global Recordings Network. SIL produced a grammar in 1997, though there are no plans in place to begin work on Bible translation. Their level of literacy is very low and schooling is only available in towns. There are few, if any Christians.

AT A GLANCE

- Most men are bilingual in Tadaksahak and French, but the women and children are often monolingual, with no access to outside ideas.
- Like many Muslim tribes, to be Idaksahak is to be Muslim.
- The Idaksahak have been part of several armed uprisings against the Malian government.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Workers to live among the Idaksahak, learn their language, and be accepted by them.
- A movement of Christ among the people and protection for those who become Christians.
- Translation of the Bible into their language and the ability to read it.
- Exposure to Christianity for Idaksahak living in towns.

Sources: Joshua Project, Wikipedia, *A Grammar of Tadaksahak, Northern Songhay Language of Mali*, 1997.



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