



PEOPLE GROUP

THE BILALA OF CENTRAL CHAD

The Bilala are a Muslim people group who live in the central region of Chad. Along with the Kuka and Medogo peoples, the Bilala make up a larger group, the Lisi. The Bilala conquered the Kuka in the 1600s and settled on their land. Today, they remain the largest and most politically dominant group. The Bilala have lived near Lake Fitri (or Lake Chad) for over five hundred years and their current population is estimated to be between 300,000 and 436,000.

The culture and language of the Bilala, unlike those of the other groups, are of Arab origin. They are predominantly Muslims as a result of the Muslim Arab merchants who have strongly influenced them from their regular trading interactions. The Bilala observe many of their pre-Islamic

practices and also follow Muslim laws and traditions. They speak a language called Naba and many also speak Arabic, which serves as a trade language in Chad.

The men practice regional trading, hunting, herding and fishing while the women perform most of the domestic duties and engage in local trade in the village markets. Polygamy is common. Families arrange marriages with the consent of the young people. The life expectancy in Chad is about 55 years, one of the lowest in the world due to communicable diseases such as malaria, respiratory infections, stroke and diarrhoeal diseases.

A majority of the Bilala have not yet heard a clear presentation of the gospel despite there being audio Scripture recordings available in the Naba language.

AT A GLANCE

- The Bilala have a need for more educational opportunities and modern health care facilities.
- Additional labourers, Christian teachers and medical workers might have opportunities to share the love of Jesus with them.
- A great need exists for Christian radio broadcasts and evangelistic resources to reach the Bilala with the gospel.

PRAY FOR

- The hearts of the Bilala people to be stirred to hunger after God.
- Family-based movements to Christ that will transform Bilala society, blessing them spiritually and economically.
- The Lord to move the hearts of believers to give up their lives to see the Bilala people blessed by the work of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour.

Sources: Joshua Project, Wikipedia, www.peoplegroups.org.



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