



- Population: 26.8 million (July 2005 estimate)
- Ethnic populations: Uzbek 79%; Russian 5%; Tajik 5%; Kazakh 3%; Others 8%
- Religion populations: Muslim 88% (mostly Sunnis); Eastern Orthodox Christian 8%; Others 4%

God is working powerfully in Uzbekistan, a Muslim country ruled by one of the most repressive regimes of the former Soviet Union. There are few personal freedoms in this land, but the Muslim-background believers know true freedom and real life in Christ. Several thousand strong, the young Uzbek Church has been persecuted, but many believers are incredibly committed to Christ and are actively proclaiming Him at home and to nearby countries such as Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Because no ethnic Uzbek churches are legally permitted to register and meet together, believers have been forced to use existing registered Russian or Korean church buildings or in homes. Home meetings are a blessing, as it is more culturally appropriate and natural for Uzbeks to gather this way. Even though anyone found guilty of holding a religious meeting in their home can be sent to prison for 17 years and have their home and possessions confiscated, believers have not stopped opening their homes for fellowship gatherings.



Powerful spiritual and social strongholds in Uzbekistan include folk Islam, drug use, alcoholism and growing problems with HIV/AIDS. The economy is struggling, and there is a high unemployment rate, putting the majority of the rural population under tremendous economic pressure. Men have been forced to seek work in other countries, which sometimes leads to the break-up of families. Some women have turned to prostitution to make ends meet. People are hungry and desperate for relief and answers. Many turn to folk Islam for help, not realizing the depths of its deceptive and dangerous practices.

► Pray

- Pray for Uzbek believers, that they would develop culturally-appropriate worship, teaching and fellowship.
- Ask God to give strength and courage to Uzbek believers who are persecuted by the government, family members and religious leaders.
- Pray for the authorities under President Karimov's administration. May God bring hope, change and true servant leadership.
- President Karimov's second and last term ends in 2007, and there is not an obvious peaceful transition of power. Pray for God's protection and His provision of wise, Godly leadership which will foster the growth of His kingdom.

