



The Saba of Chad

The Saba trace themselves back to a common father, whose name was Dolle. He came from afar and settled at the foot of the mountain called Takung. The word Saba is Arabic for East, which reminds them that their ancestor Dolle came from the east.

Even today, the Saba enjoy celebrations and dances. They will often stay up until late in the evening to jump, sing, and dance joyfully. These festivities also include a time of singing together.

Although the Saba are surrounded by Muslim groups, they still respect the "margai", the spirits which inhabit the hills, the trees, the dry river beds, and the animals.

The Saba live their lives very carefully, not desiring to offend or anger the margai. As far as they are concerned, no calamity comes upon any of them by accident. The margai spirits cause them.

Primary Religion:

Islam, Muslim-Animism

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

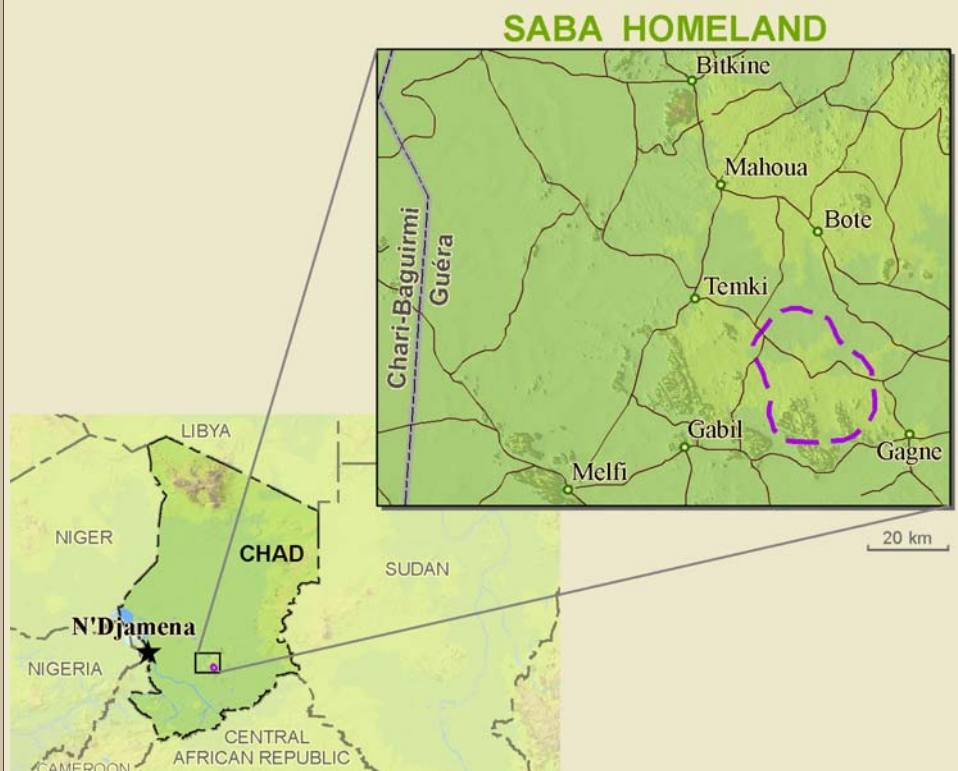
Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None in their language

Population (date):

2,000 (1981)



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| Item Name | Item Note | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Have They Heard The Gospel? | | Profile Summary |
| Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%) | 100% | |
| Response To The Gospel | Translation of the Scriptures into Saba may be the key to reaching this group with the Good News. | |
| Number Of Communities | 18+ | |
| Is The Word Of God Translated? | No | |
| Translation Medium | None | |
| Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution? | The unavailability of the scriptures in the Saba language. Islam, presented to the Saba in Shuwa Arabic, has not been able to make inroads to their culture. Muslims see Saba as an "outsider language." | |
| Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary) | There is a Gospel Recordings cassette in the Saba language. | |
| What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed? | Yes, there is a need for a team of culturally sensitive Christians to work in Bible translation and literacy development, as well as to help open a well-stocked medical dispensary. | |
| Population All Countries | | Group Description |
| World Population For This People | 2,000 | |
| World Population (Date) | 1981 | |
| Comment (World Population) | Urban population figures are unknown. | |
| Countries Where People Group Lives | | Group Description |
| Country Name | Chad | |
| Geography & Environment | | Group Description |
| Location | South of Bitkine, North of Melfi. Temki and Bara are main towns of the Saba. | |
| Country | Chad | |
| Ecosystem Type | Savannas | |
| Geological Type | Plains | |
| Elevation | 250-500 meters above sea level | |
| Longitude | 11.5 degrees north | |
| Latitude | 18.1 degrees east | |
| Climate | Hot and arid | |
| Language & Linguistics | | Group Description |
| Comment (Language) | The percentage of monolinguals needs to be researched. | |
| Alternate Language Names | Sabaye | |
| Attitude Towards Mother Tongue | Very receptive | |
| Other Mother Tongues Of This Group | ARABIC, SHUWA | |
| Other Mother Tongues Of This Group | SOKORO | |
| Linguistically Related Languages | BAREIN | |
| Linguistically Related Languages | SOKORO | |
| Comments (Related Languages) | Wordlist comparison (LEXISTAT) between Saba and Barein indicated the lexical similarity between Saba and Barein to be about 31.4%. | |
| Comments (Related Languages) | Wordlist comparison (LEXISTAT) showed the percentage of lexical similarity between Saba and Sokoro to be about 45.6%. | |
| Comments (Related Languages) | The percentage of Shuwa Arabic speakers may be high; this is the language of communication with outsiders. | |
| Comments (Related Languages) | The Bara people reported that when a Saba meets a Sokoro, each can speak in his own language and make himself understood. In addition, they said that a seven year old Saba child can understand Sokoro. | |
| Neighboring Languages | MOGUM | |
| Neighboring Languages | BOLGO | |

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|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Neighboring Languages | ARABIC, SHUWA | |
| Neighboring Languages | SOKORO | |
| Literacy | | Group Description |
| Adult Literacy Percentage | 15% | |
| Literacy Attitude | Very receptive | |
| Active Literacy Program | No | |
| Comment (Literacy) | El Hadj Hamat Amane said that there are more Saba students than students in neighboring language groups. Therefore, it may be assumed that there are a good number of literate Saba in the region. | |
| Economics | | Group Description |
| Subsistence Type | Pastoralists | |
| Average Annual Income | Less than \$400 per year | |
| Occupation | Growing millet | |
| Income Sources | Selling their millet at the Temki market | |
| Products / Crafts | Millet | |
| Trade Partners | The Arabs trade milk and meat for the Saba's agricultural products. | |
| Modernization / Utilities | "Mission Allemande," probably a community development agency, helps the Saba with plows, grains, and self help loans, according to Hamat Amane. | |
| Comment (Economy) | The Saba may produce other products or crafts. This needs further research. | |
| Community Development | | Group Description |
| Health Care (Quality) | None | |
| Comment (Health Care) | The nearest dispensary is forty miles (sixty-six kilometers) away, in Bitkine, over very poorly maintained roads. | |
| Diet (Quality) | Good | |
| Comment (Diet) | Millet with green vegetables or sauce made of chicken or beef. | |
| Water (Quality) | Poor | |
| Comment (Water) | Well digging is a development need of the area, according to Hamat Amane. | |
| Shelter Description | A round hut, with a cone-shaped straw roof. | |
| Energy/Fuel (Quality) | None | |
| Comment (Energy) | The Saba use brushwood for cooking and heating. | |
| Clothing | Woven fabrics, imported from outside Chad and bought from the Shuwa Arab tradesmen. Men wear the jalabiya, a long white robe with long sleeves. Women wear the lafay, also a robe, but wider and more colorful. | |
| Transportation | Donkeys and donkey carts are irregularly available between Bitkine and Melfi. But most travel is usually done on foot. | |
| Infant Mortality Rate | 18% | |
| Life Expectancy | 31 years | |
| Leading Cause Of Death | Intestinal infections | |
| Society & Culture | | Group Description |
| Family Structures | Extended family | |
| Neighbor Relations | Cohesive, interdependent | |
| Authority / Rule | Village chiefs are subservient to the canton chief. | |
| Cultural Change Pace | Slow | |
| Identification With National Culture | Distinct | |
| Self Image | Neutral | |
| Judicial / Punishment System | Village chief and elders settle disputes. | |

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| Item Name | Item Note | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Celebrations | Islamic (Ramadan, Eid Al-Ahda...) Traditional festivals | |
| Recreations | Socializing, evening dances | |
| Media | Radio Nationale du Tchad broadcasts in Sara, Shuwa Arabic, and French. Most of the Saba understand the Shuwa Arabic broadcasts best. | |
| Local Language Broadcasting | None | |
| Attitude To Outsiders | Very receptive | |
| Attitude To Change | Very receptive | |
| Youth | | Group Description |
| Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds) | Helping in the family field. The older girls help with the housework and younger children. | |
| Comment (Youth) | The situation among the youth needs further research. | |
| Education | | Group Description |
| Primary Schools | 3 | |
| Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled | 20% | |
| Language Of Instruction Early Years | French | |
| Language Of Textbooks Early Years | French | |
| Language Of Instruction Later Years | French | |
| Language Of Textbooks Later Years | French | |
| Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous | 3 | |
| Comment (Education) | There are schools in Sorki, Poss, and Bara. The "eligible enrolled" are figures from national statistics describing the whole country of Chad. | |
| Church Growth | | Status of Christianity |
| Comment (Reached Status) | Contextual communication; spend time learning the Saba traditions in order to reach the Saba. Work with the Assemblées Chrétiennes du Tchad, as they have a vision for reaching the Guéra region for Christ. | |
| Comment (Church Growth) | There are no known Saba Christians, nor are there any Christian missions or Chadian nationals reaching out to the Saba people. | |
| Religion & Response | | Status of Christianity |
| Religious Practices & Ceremonies | Most of the Saba follow the "Margai", or traditional religion. Margai are the spirits of nature around them. They must be appeased or they will cause some calamity to be brought upon the Saba's house. The recitation of the Qu'ran may be used as protection against the Margai. | |
| Attitude To Christianity | Somewhat receptive | |
| Attitude To Religious Change | Somewhat receptive | |
| Resistance / Receptivity | Adherence to Islam is nominal; they may be open to hear and respond to the Good News. | |
| Religious Analogies & Bridges | The Word of God can be shown to be more powerful than the spirit world. The need to submit to God's Word, and the consequences of not doing so, should be brought out, because a departure from the spirit world's authority over them leads to anarchy. | |
| Spiritual Climate And Openness | The Saba are not strong Muslims. They were not observed praying. Also, the songs the young people were observed singing together were said to be songs the Muslims would not tolerate because of the themes. | |
| Current Needs | There is a need for educational development, well digging, and a well-stocked dispensary. | |
| Items For Prayer | Pray for God to send a Christian team that will commit themselves to preaching the Good News contextually to the Saba. Pray that the Saba will hear and respond to the message of Christ's love for them. | |
| Scripture | | Status of Christianity |
| Translation Status | Definite | |
| Available Scripture | None | |

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Item Name

Item Note

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available

El Hadj Hamat Amane said there was once a priest who wrote Saba down, but besides this lead, there is nothing.

Audio Recordings Available

Gospel Recordings, a cassette 30 minutes long.

Films Available

Nothing available in Saba.

Radio Programs Available

Nothing broadcast in Saba.

Videos Available

Nothing available in Saba.

Audio Visual Available

Nothing available in Saba.