

## The Samburu of Kenya



Samburu woman by L. Rizzello cropped CC

Kenya’s 160,000 Samburu speakers resisted acceptance of the Gospel for 50 years. Yet God opened their hearts, and many now follow Christ.

Like the related Maasai, many Samburu are nomadic cattle herders. Five to 10 families move together to new pasture lands every five weeks. Pastors regularly visit city and village families, but maintaining contact with nomads is difficult. Those believers have few Christians for fellowship, when they move so much.

Pastors preach from the available Maasai translation to the Samburu and a neighboring group, the Ilchamus, but they struggle to communicate Scripture concepts effectively. Language is a significant hurdle, though the groups are related. Some Maasai words are derogatory or vulgar in Samburu.

Cultural differences also create issues between Samburu and Ilchamus villages. Many Ilchamus people fish and grow crops for a living. These are taboo activities for the Maasai and are seldom done by Samburu speakers.

In a 2004 meeting, about 11 Samburu church leaders from various denominations shared a story: “The Samburu once had a ‘book.’ But a cow ate their ‘book.’ And the only way to get the ‘book’ back is through the cow.” Church leaders then promised to each donate a cow to help fund translation work.

**Primary Religion:**

Ethnic Religions

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**

Perhaps 5%

**Churches:**

Yes

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**

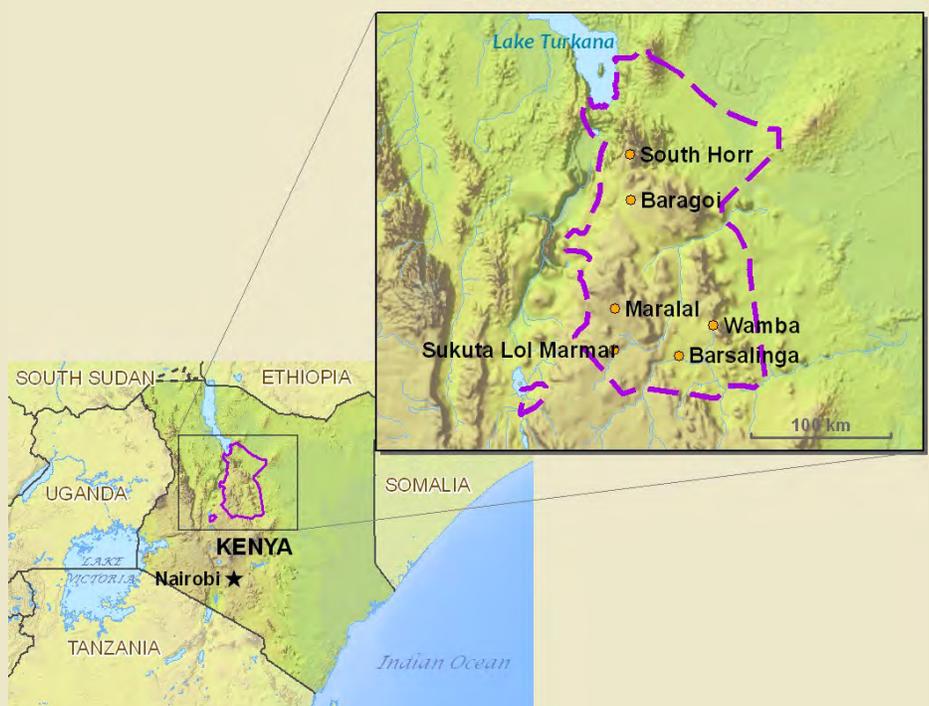
New Testament in progress

**Population (date):**

160,000



### SAMBURU HOMELAND



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### **Have They Heard The Gospel?**

Is the Word of God Translated?

After the mother tongue New Testament is dedicated, the translation team hopes to watch God increase the number of believers. This has occurred among Maasai speakers since 1994, when they published their New Testament. Today, the Maasai eagerly share their faith throughout communities, and many people respond to follow Christ. Maasai speakers will also explain the Gospel to Samburu villagers, with the new translation.

Response to the Gospel

About 8,000 Samburu attend churches.

Hindrance to Scripture Distribution

Large Samburu areas have only a few struggling congregations, or no Christian witness at all. Church leaders face unique challenges to bring God's Word to these nomad people, in the heart language they understand best.