



Micronesia, Federated States of

International Religious Freedom Report 2004

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country's total area is approximately 260 square miles, and its population is approximately 107,000, according to the 2000 census. Several Protestant denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, are present in the four states of the country. The most prevalent Protestant denomination is the United Church of Christ. On the island of Kosrae, 99 percent of the population are members of the United Church of Christ; on Pohnpei, the population is evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics; on Chuuk and Yap, approximately 60 percent are Catholic and 40 percent are Protestant. Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Salvation Army, Assembly of God, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and adherents of the Baha'i Faith also are represented. There is a small group of Buddhists on Pohnpei.

Most immigrants are Filipino Catholics who join local Catholic churches.

On the island of Pohnpei, clan divisions mark religious boundaries in some measure. More Protestants live on the Western side of the island, while more Catholics live on the Eastern side.

Missionaries of many faiths work within the country, including Seventh-day Adventists and Mormons.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels strives to protect this right in full and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. The Bill of Rights forbids establishment of a state religion and governmental restrictions on freedom of religion. There is no state religion.

Foreign missionary groups operate without hindrance in all four states.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

There were no reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations during the period covered by this report.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

The generally amicable relations among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its policy to promote human rights. Representatives of the Embassy regularly meet with the leaders of religious communities in the country.

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