



Marshall Islands

International Religious Freedom Report 2007

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

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

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

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious belief or practice.

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 is an archipelago with an area of approximately 70 square miles and a population of 61,800. Major religious groups include the United Church of Christ (formerly Congregational), with 54.8 percent of the population; the Assemblies of God, 25.8 percent; and the Roman Catholic Church, 8.4 percent. Also represented are Bukot Non Jesus (also known as Assembly of God Part Two), 2.8 percent; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), 2.1 percent; Seventh-day Adventists, 0.9 percent; Full Gospel, 0.7 percent; and the Baha'i Faith, 0.6 percent. Persons without any religious affiliation account for 1.5 percent of the population. Islam and the Jehovah's Witnesses were each believed to have a few hundred practitioners.

Foreign missionaries are present and operate freely. Religious schools are operated by the Roman Catholic Church, United Church of Christ, Assemblies of God, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Bukot Non Jesus, and the Baptist Church.

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 sought to protect this right in full, and did not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Good Friday, Gospel Day, and Christmas are official religious holidays. These holidays do not negatively affect any religious groups.

There are no criteria for registering religious groups, nor are there consequences for not registering.

There is no religious education in public schools, and there are no opening or closing prayers during the school day. However, most extracurricular school events begin and end with an interdenominational Christian prayer.

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.

Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious belief or practice. Christianity is the dominant social and cultural force. Governmental and social functions typically begin and end with an interdenominational Christian prayer delivered by an ordained minister, cleric, or church official.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

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

Released on September 14, 2007

[International Religious Freedom Report Home Page](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90144.htm)