



## St. Kitts and Nevis

### 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 has an area of 104 square miles and a population of 46,000. Christianity is the dominant religion. An estimated 50 percent of the population adhere to Anglican beliefs, and 25 percent are Roman Catholic. Methodists, Moravians, Seventh-day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses are also present. Evangelical Christian groups have been gaining followers. There is a small Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) community. Minority religious groups include Rastafarians and members of the Baha'i Faith. There is no organized Jewish community, although there is a Jewish cemetery on Nevis.

#### Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

##### Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected 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. The Government is secular and did not interfere with an individual's right to worship.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for the registration of religious groups.

The Christian holy days of Good Friday, Easter, Whit Monday, and Christmas are national holidays.

There were two Catholic schools and a Seventh-day Adventist school. The Government did not contribute financially to these schools. The Government requires all schools to conduct morning Christian prayers and hymns.

##### 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 in the country.

##### 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; however, Rastafarians complained of discrimination, especially in hiring and in schools.

The St. Kitts Christian Council, which included Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and other traditional Christian religious groups, conducted activities to promote greater mutual understanding and tolerance among adherents of different Christian denominations. The Evangelical Association united 11 churches in the evangelical community and promoted their interests.

### Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

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

Released on September 14, 2007

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