



St. Kitts and Nevis

International Religious Freedom Report 2008

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

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

The Government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom 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 adheres to Anglican beliefs, and 25 percent are Roman Catholic. Methodists, Moravians, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Rastafarians, Muslims, and members of the Baha'i Faith are also present. Evangelical Christian groups are gaining followers. 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 other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against 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 Government observes Good Friday, Easter, Whit Monday, and Christmas as 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

The Government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government during the period covered by this report.

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

Rastafarians complained of discrimination, especially in hiring and in schools. There were no other reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

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 traditions. The Evangelical Association united 11 churches in the evangelical community and promoted their interests. The local university hosted (and the Government supported) an interfaith service which brought together Baha'i, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Rastafarian, and other religious practitioners.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. In September 2007 the Ambassador hosted an iftar for all the Islamic communities in the Eastern Caribbean, which included participants from St. Kitts and Nevis. The Embassy conducted followup outreach with Muslim leaders and students in Nevis. The Embassy also conducted outreach with the Baha'i community in St. Kitts.

Released on September 19, 2008

[International Religious Freedom Report Home Page](#)



Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.