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2000 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom: Sao Tome and Principe

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
U.S. Department of State, September 5, 2000

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

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

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report.

Both government policy and the generally amicable relationship among religions in society contribute to the free practice of religion.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

Section I. Government Policies on Freedom of Religion

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for religious freedom, and the Government respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Religious Demography

The country is predominantly Roman Catholic. Approximately 90 percent of the population are Catholic, 5 percent practice traditional indigenous religions, 5 percent are atheist, and less than 1 percent are Protestant.

There are no restrictions on the activities of foreign clergy. There are Catholic and Protestant missionaries in the country. Missionaries of other religions also operated unhindered.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious detainees or prisoners.

Forced Religious Conversion of Minor U.S. Citizens

There were no reports of the forced religious conversion of minor U.S. citizens who had

been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section II. Societal Attitudes

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities.

Section III. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Embassy, based in Libreville, Gabon, discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the overall context of the promotion of human rights.

In addition, embassy officials regularly meet with the country's Catholic bishop during visits.

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