The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

There were a few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

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 292,260 square miles and an estimated population of 17 million. According to the most recent census (2002), 70 percent of the population over the age of 14 identified as Roman Catholic and 15.1 percent as evangelical. In the census, the term "evangelical" referred to all non-Catholic Christian churches with the exception of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, the Orthodox Church (Armenian, Greek, Persian, Serbian, and Ukrainian), and Seventh-day Adventists. Approximately 90 percent of "evangelicals" are Pentecostal. Anglican, Baptist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed Evangelical, and Wesleyan churches constitute the remaining 10 percent of "evangelicals." Other groups include Bahais, Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, and members of the Unification Church.

Indigenous persons make up 5 percent of the population. Sixty-five percent of indigenous persons identify themselves as Catholic, 29 percent as evangelical, and 6 percent as "other." Mapuche communities, constituting 87 percent of
indigenous citizens, continue to respect traditional religious leaders (Longkos and Machis), and anecdotal information indicates a high degree of syncretism in worship and traditional healing practices.

Members of the largest religious groups (Catholics, Pentecostals, and other "evangelicals") are present throughout the country. Jewish communities are located in Santiago, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Valdivia, Temuco, Concepción, La Serena, and Iquique (there is no synagogue in Iquique). There are mosques in Santiago, Iquique, and Coquimbo.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework


The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

Church and state are officially separate. The 1999 law on religion prohibits religious discrimination; however, the Catholic Church enjoyed a privileged status and occasionally received preferential treatment. Government officials attended Catholic events and also major Protestant and Jewish ceremonies. The National Office for Religious Affairs is mandated to work with all religious organizations to provide for the implementation of constitutional provisions for religious freedom.

The law allows any religious group to apply for religious nonprofit status. The Ministry of Justice may not refuse to accept a registration petition, although it may object to the petition within 90 days on the grounds that all legal prerequisites for registration were not satisfied. The petitioner then has 60 days to address objections raised by the ministry or challenge the ministry in court. Once a religious entity is registered, the state cannot dissolve it by decree. The semiautonomous Council for the Defense of the State may initiate a judicial review; however, no organization that registered under the 1999 law was subsequently deregistered. In addition the law allows religious entities to adopt a charter and bylaws suited to a religious organization rather than a private corporation. They may establish affiliates (schools, clubs, and sports organizations) without registering them as separate entities. There are more than 2,000 registered religious groups.

The 1999 law on religion grants other religious groups the same right the Catholic Church possesses to have chaplains in public hospitals, prisons, and military units. Hospital regulations continue specifically to permit Catholic chaplains in hospitals and, if requested by a patient, to provide access to chaplains and lay practitioners of other religions. In the prison system, there were 35 Catholic chapels, 40 paid Catholic chaplains, 25 volunteer Catholic chaplains, and 1,200 religious or lay volunteers authorized to conduct Catholic religious activities. There were nine paid evangelical chaplains, 90 volunteer evangelical chaplains, and more than 2,000 evangelical volunteers representing 200 evangelical groups.

Regulations for the armed forces and law enforcement agencies allow officially registered religious groups to appoint a chaplain to serve in each branch of the armed forces, in the national uniformed police, and in the national investigative police. As a result, each branch has a national evangelical chaplain in addition to a Catholic chaplain.

A 2002 law on freedom of expression and information and the press prohibits the use of any means of social communication to publish or transmit information designed to promote hatred of or hostility towards persons or groups based on their race, gender, religion, or national identity, and establishes fines for infractions.

Publicly subsidized schools are required to offer religious education two teaching hours per week through high school; although parents may decide to have their children omit religious education. Religious instruction in public schools is almost exclusively Catholic, although the Ministry of Education approved curricula for 14 other religious groups. Schools must teach the religion requested by the parents. However, enforcement was sometimes lax, and non-Catholic religious
教育通常通过周日学校和其他场所提供。地方学校管理者决定资金用于宗教教学。国家宗教事务办公室在必要时可用，以帮助地方政府办公室发展社区支持的课程，并在适当情况下提供非天主教的宗教教育。缺乏非天主教宗教教师及资金限制阻碍了在所有市镇的实施。父母可以让孩子在家上学或为宗教原因将其送入私立学校。

政府将以下宗教节日列为全国性节日：耶稣受难日，处女玛利亚的盛宴，圣彼得和保罗的盛宴，圣母升天，福音派教会国家日，万圣节，圣母无玷圣婴盛宴，和圣诞节。

宗教自由限制

政府在法律和实践上普遍尊重宗教自由。在报告期间，政府对宗教自由的尊重状况没有改变。

如果活动具有军事性质，所有参与单位的成员都可能被要求参加圣餐仪式。

在国家内没有关于宗教囚犯或拘留者的报告。

第三章。社会行动影响宗教自由的情况

有一些关于基于宗教信仰、信念或实践的社会性虐待或歧视的报告。

智利犹太社团报告，在报告期间发生了一系列反犹事件。这些包括针对学校的涂鸦，以及对社区成员的骚扰和威胁，如炸弹威胁和网上骚扰。在10月6日的新闻报道中，智利犹太社团的副主席指出在圣地亚哥、洛塔和普特阿莫特发生了各种形式的破坏行为。

9月17日，警察逮捕了法比安·托雷斯，一名涉嫌对犹太社区和其代表人制作威胁的新纳粹派人士，他在Facebook上发表这些言论。调查在年终时仍在进行。

11月初的新闻报道指出了圣地亚哥一所私立学校在11月8日，一名九岁的穆斯林女孩因戴面纱而被赶出学校。教育部对此进行了调查，并在11月8日表示，将允许女孩继续在那里学习并佩戴面纱。学校否认了驱赶女孩的行为，并认为没有歧视存在。

第四章。美国政府政策

美国政府与政府讨论宗教自由问题，同时还作为促进人权政策的一部分。美国驻该国大使馆代表与多个宗教领袖保持接触。