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## Guinea-Bissau

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **July-December, 2010 International Religious Freedom Report**

Report

**September 13, 2011**

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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 no 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 13,944 square miles and a population of 1.5 million.

Approximately 50 percent of the population follows indigenous religious practices, 40 percent is Muslim, and 10 percent is Christian.

The Fula (Peuhl or Fulani) and Mandinka ethnic groups practice Islam most widely; Muslims generally live in the north and northeast, and almost all Muslims are Sunni. Practitioners of indigenous religious beliefs generally live in all but the northern parts of the country. Christians belong to a number of groups, including the Roman Catholic Church and various Protestant denominations. Christians are concentrated in Bissau and other large towns.

#### Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

##### Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

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

The government requires that religious groups obtain licenses but reportedly did not refuse such license applications.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Good Friday, Easter, All Saints' Day, Tabaski (Abraham's sacrifice), and Christmas.

#### Restrictions on Religious Freedom

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 no reports of abuses, including religious prisoners or detainees, in the country.

#### Section III. Status of Societal Actions Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

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

#### 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. Since there is no U.S. embassy in the country, the U.S. embassy in Dakar, Senegal, handled all official contact with the country.

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