



## Namibia

### 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 320,827 square miles and a population of 2 million. More than 90 percent of citizens identify themselves as Christian. The two largest Christian groups are the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, while smaller numbers are affiliated with the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). There are also a number of Zionist Churches (a mixture of traditional African beliefs and Pentecostal Christianity), especially in urban areas. The Dutch Reformed Church of Namibia is predominantly made up of members of the Afrikaner ethnic group. The Himba and San ethnic groups comprise less than 1 percent and 3 percent respectively, practice indigenous religions. Other religions that are practiced in the country include Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and the Baha'i Faith. Practitioners of these religious groups are predominantly immigrants, descendants of immigrants, or recent converts. They reside primarily in urban areas. There are few atheists in the country. Muslims, almost exclusively Sunni and comprising both citizens and foreign nationals, represent less than 1 percent of the population.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country.

#### 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. There is no state religion, nor does the Government subsidize any particular denomination.

The Government does not formally recognize any religion. Unlike in the past, the Government and senior ruling party officials no longer emphasize the role of three Christian groups--Anglican, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic--in mobilizing political support. Since his election President Hifikepunye Pohamba has conferred with religious leaders of all persuasions, including the predominantly Afrikaner Dutch Reformed Church.

There are no registration requirements for religious organizations.

The Government recognizes the holy days of Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, and Christmas Day as national holidays.

##### 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.

#### 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.

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