



Seychelles

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 444 square miles and a population of 83,000. The 2002 government census estimated that 82 percent of the population is Roman Catholic and 6 percent is Anglican. There are other Christian groups, including Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Church, the Pentecostal Assembly, Nazarites, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Hinduism, Islam, and Baha'i also have adherents within the country.

Foreign missionary groups are active 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.

The Catholic, Anglican, and Seventh-day Adventist Churches, mosques, and the Baha'i local spiritual assembly have individual acts of incorporation. Other religious groups that are not corporate bodies are registered as associations with the Registrar General and are entitled to tax-free privileges, similar to a charity. Twenty-five religious organizations were registered with the Registrar of Association. All religious organizations must register to be entitled to tax-free privileges. If an organization does not want such privileges, it is not required to register.

The Government tends to remain uninvolved with religious matters, but it provides program time to different religious organizations on the national radio broadcasting service. On alternate Sunday mornings, the national radio service airs Catholic Mass and Anglican services, which last from 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. The Muslim and Hindu groups are allowed 15-minute broadcasts every Friday afternoon, and the Baha'is and Seventh-day Adventists are allowed 15-minute broadcasts every Saturday afternoon.

Government employees of all religious backgrounds can request paid leave on any of their holy days, and such leave usually is granted. The Islamic Society of Seychelles generally submits requests to the Department of Public Administration for Muslim employees to receive leave on Islamic festival days.

The majority of government ministers are Catholic.

The Government assisted a number of religious groups during the reporting period by providing grants to assist in renovation of churches.

The Catholic holy days of Good Friday, Easter, Corpus Christi, Assumption of Mary, All Saints' Day, Immaculate Conception Day, and Christmas are national holidays. There are no non-Christian holy days that are national holidays.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

The Government introduced an amendment to the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Act (BTA) that prevents political parties and religious groups from obtaining radio licenses. The original BTA allowed religious groups to obtain radio licenses. The amendment to the BTA was approved by the National Assembly on October 3 and incorporated into law on October 16, 2006.

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.

Released on September 14, 2007

[International Religious Freedom Report Home Page](#)