

DOMINICA 2014 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom of thought, freedom to practice religion, and freedom from oaths contrary to one's beliefs. Rastafarians expressed concern about the government's prohibition of marijuana use.

There were no reports of significant societal actions affecting religious freedom.

The U.S. embassy discussed religious freedom with representatives of the government and civil society.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 73,449 (July 2014 estimate). The 2001 census, the most recent available, indicates approximately 61 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Seventh-day Adventists and Pentecostals comprise 6 percent each, and Baptists and Methodists 4 percent each. Other small religious groups include Anglicans, Bahais, Christian Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Nazarenes, Rastafarians, and members of the Church of Christ. Six percent of the population professes no religious affiliation.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom of thought, freedom to practice religion, and freedom from oaths contrary to one's beliefs. By law the government may make exceptions in the interests of public order and morality as "reasonably required."

Religious groups seeking non-profit status must register with the attorney general's office by submitting a church registration form. The attorney general's Registry Office reviews and approves applications. Any organization denied permission to register has the right to apply for judicial review. By law religious groups must register buildings used exclusively as places of worship with the registrar general, or if banns of marriage are published there.

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The constitution grants religious groups the right to establish and maintain schools and to provide religious instruction.

The government prohibits the use of marijuana, including for religious purposes.

Government Practices

The government subsidized teacher salaries at schools affiliated with the Catholic, Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist Churches.

Christian prayer took place during morning assembly in public schools, although non-Christian students were not required to participate.

Rastafarians expressed concern about the government's prohibition of marijuana use, which they described as integral to their religious rituals.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were no reports of significant societal actions affecting religious freedom.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

U.S. embassy officials discussed religious freedom with the government and nongovernmental organizations, including religious charitable organizations and coalitions of clergy and laypeople.