



Monaco

International Religious Freedom Report 2007

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The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, there are some restrictions. Roman Catholicism is the official religion. Religious freedom, freedom of religious practice, and public expression are provided for in articles 2, 9, and 23 of the Constitution.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The Government denies permission to operate to religious organizations it regards as "sects."

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 principality has an area of 0.8 square miles and a population of 35,000. Catholicism is the state religion, and most of the approximately 7,200 Monegasque citizens adhere to that faith, at least nominally. There were five Catholic churches in the principality, in addition to a cathedral. An archbishop presides over the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Monaco. Protestantism is the next most practiced religion, with two churches. There was a Greek Orthodox church and one synagogue. The Constitution provides the 28,000 noncitizen residents the same religious freedom as citizens. Most noncitizens also adhere to either Catholicism or Protestantism, although there are some who practice Judaism, Islam, or other religious beliefs. There are an estimated 1,000 Jewish noncitizen residents. There are no mosques. No missionaries operated in the principality.

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; however, there are some restrictions. Catholicism is the state religion and most citizens practiced it. Catholic ritual generally played an important role in state festivities such as the annual national day celebration and significant events in the life of the ruling family.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

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

No missionaries operated in the principality, and proselytizing was strongly discouraged. However, there is no law against proselytizing by religious organizations that are registered formally by the Ministry of State. Authorities routinely have denied registration to organizations regarded as religious "sects"; however, there were no reports of religious organizations being denied registration during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees in the principality.

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. There is an active ecumenical movement. Periodically through the year, religious leaders of various denominations participate in joint religious services as well as cultural events in order to promote greater understanding and mutual tolerance among different confessions. Representatives of all religious groups are invited to participate in state celebrations in the Cathedral of Monaco. There were no reports of societal religious violence in the principality.

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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