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Monaco

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

International Religious Freedom Report 2010

November 17, 2010

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

The government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period. 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 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 principality has an area of 0.8 square miles and a population of 35,000. Roman Catholicism is the state religion, and most of the approximately 7,200 citizens adhere to that faith, at least nominally. There are five Catholic churches in the principality, in addition to a cathedral. An archbishop presides over the Archdiocese of Monaco. Protestantism is the next most-practiced religion, with two churches. There is also one Greek Orthodox Church. 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 1,000 Jewish noncitizen residents and one synagogue. There are no mosques.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion; however, there are some restrictions. The government does not have an official list of banned groups, but denies registration to those considered to be involved in "dangerous" sectarian activity by France's Inter-Ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat Against Sectarian Aberrations (MIVILUDES). Any request to set up an association or hold a meeting from such a group is denied.

Catholic ritual generally plays 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

The government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

There is no law against proselytizing by religious organizations. The government reported that it neither received nor denied requests for registration of groups considered to be involved with dangerous sectarian activity by MIVILUDES during the reporting period; however, the government stated that if such requests were made, they would be denied.

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

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. There is an active ecumenical movement. Religious leaders of various denominations periodically participate in joint religious services and cultural events to promote greater understanding and mutual tolerance among different confessions. Representatives of all government-recognized religious groups are invited to participate in state celebrations in the Cathedral of Monaco.

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.

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