



San Marino

International Religious Freedom Report 2008

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The law 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 period covered by this report.

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 country has an area of 37.57 square miles and a population of 30,000.

The Government does not provide statistics on the size of religious groups, and there were no census data providing information on religious membership; however, it was estimated that more than 90 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Other religious groups include small numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, Muslims, Jews, and members of the Waldesian Church. In recent years the number of members of the Orthodox Church has greatly increased due to immigration from Eastern European Countries.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution and law provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

Although Catholicism is dominant, it is not the state religion, and the law prohibits discrimination based on religion. Catholic principles permeate state institutions symbolically; for example, crucifixes sometimes hang on courtroom or government office walls. The Catholic Church receives direct benefits from the state through income tax revenues; taxpayers may request that 0.3 percent of their income tax payments be allocated to the Catholic Church or to "other" charities, including three other religious groups--the Waldesian Church, Baha'i Community, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Any charity can obtain this benefit by meeting the requirements of San Marino law #9 of 1993 (which specifies that recipient organizations be established as a non-profit with San Marino nationality). Such organizations need not register, but will be contacted by tax authorities should they be designated by a taxpayer, to prove their legitimacy and to make available their financial statement.

There are no private religious schools; the school system is public and state-financed. Public schools provide Catholic religious instruction; however, students may choose without penalty not to participate.

The Government observes Epiphany, Saint Agatha, Easter, Corpus Domini, All Saints' Day, Commemoration of the Dead, Immaculate Conception, and Christmas as national holidays.

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 period covered by this report.

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 affiliation, belief, or practice.

Catholicism is not a state religion, but it is dominant in society, since most citizens were born and raised under Catholic principles that form part of their culture. The country's dominant Catholic heritage may inform individual choices on lifestyle matters such as marriage or divorce, although there is no government suasion involved.

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 and has found the Government open to such discussions.

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