

CAPE VERDE

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

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

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

Cape Verde is an archipelago consisting of 10 islands, nine of which are inhabited. It has an area of 1,557 square miles and a population of 491,571 according to the census during the year. More than 85 percent of the population is nominally Roman Catholic, according to an informal poll taken by local churches. The largest Protestant denomination is the Church of the Nazarene. Other groups include Seventh-day Adventists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Assemblies of God, Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, and other Pentecostal and evangelical groups. There are small Bahai communities and a small but growing Muslim community. No reliable statistics exist on membership.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

The constitution protects the right of individuals to choose and change their religion and to interpret their religious beliefs for themselves.

The penal code states that violations of religious freedom are crimes subject to a penalty of between three months and three years imprisonment.

The constitution provides for the separation of church and state and prohibits the state from imposing any religious beliefs and practices.

The Catholic Church enjoys a privileged status, although it is not the state religion. For example, the government provides the Catholic Church with free television broadcasting time for religious services.

The constitution provides for freedom of association; however, all associations, whether religious or secular, must register with the Ministry of Justice to be recognized as legal entities. Registration is mandatory under the constitution and the law of associations. The constitution sets forth the criteria for all associations, including religious ones, and states that an association may not be military or armed; may not be aimed at promoting violence, racism, xenophobia, or dictatorship; and may not be in violation of penal law. Groups that register may apply for government or private loans and benefits as associations. In order to register, a religious group must submit a copy of its charter and statutes signed by its members to the Ministry of Justice; however, failure to register with the Ministry of Justice does not result in any restriction on religious belief or practice.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Easter, All Saints' Day, and Christmas. In addition each municipality has a holiday to honor its Catholic patron saint.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

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

There were no reports of abuses, including religious prisoners or detainees, in the country.

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.

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.