

TANZANIA

Executive Summary

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally respected religious freedom. The government did not demonstrate a trend toward either improvement or deterioration in respect for and protection of the right to religious freedom.

There were a few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Religion was an important part of daily life in the country, and relations between religious groups were generally peaceful and positive.

The U.S. government engaged with religious leaders and discussed religious freedom as part of a broader effort to promote human rights in the country.

Section I. Religious Demography

Accurate demographic information was difficult to gather. The government does not collect religious identification data in its census as a matter of policy. The country's Interfaith Council (a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that brings together leaders of Christian, Muslim, Baha'i, Hindu, and Buddhist communities to foster peace and strengthened relationships among religious groups) does not keep statistics on religious identity. Many religious groups in Tanzania were reluctant to estimate religious demographics; however, there were reports that the population is 50 percent Christian and 50 percent Muslim. A Pew Forum survey conducted in 2010 suggests that approximately 60 percent of the population is Christian, roughly 35 percent Muslim, and around 3 percent adhere to other religions.

On the mainland, Muslim communities are concentrated in coastal areas, with some large Muslim minorities also in inland urban areas. Zanzibar is 98 percent Muslim. Between 80 and 90 percent of the Muslim population is Sunni. The remainder consists of several Shia subgroups, mostly of Asian descent. The Christian population is mostly composed of Roman Catholics, Protestants (including Pentecostals and Seventh-day Adventists), members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Jehovah's Witnesses. Other active religious groups include Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, and Baha'is.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. Government policy prohibits discrimination against persons based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Religious organizations are banned from involvement in politics.

Zanzibar forms part of the union government of Tanzania. While Zanzibar has its own president, constitution, court system, and legislature, Zanzibar is subject to the Tanzanian constitution and the religious freedom provisions therein.

Customary and statutory laws govern Christians in both criminal and civil cases. Muslims are governed by customary and statutory law in criminal cases, but civil cases fall in a separate system. In Zanzibar, Muslims have a parallel system of kadhi courts (Muslim courts administered by a judge trained in the Islamic legal tradition) to judge matters of divorce, child custody, inheritance, and other issues covered by customary Islamic law. All cases tried in Zanzibar courts, except those involving constitutional issues and Islamic law, can be appealed to the Union Court of Appeals on the mainland. Decisions of Zanzibar's kadhi courts can be appealed to a special court consisting of the Zanzibar chief justice and five other sheikhs. The kadhi, who is the senior Islamic scholar responsible for interpreting the Qur'an, is approved by the president and recognized as a judge. There is also a kadhi court of appeal. On the mainland, Muslims are subject to Islamic law in civil cases. If the involved parties cannot come to an agreement with the guidance of Muslim leaders, these cases are heard by magistrate courts, as there is no kadhi court system on the mainland.

The National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA) has called for the establishment of a mainland kadhi court. In 2010, a committee formed by Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda forwarded recommendations on the proposed structure and operation of a mainland kadhi court and its legal authority, budget, and incorporation into the existing legal system to a panel of clerics and legal experts. At year's end, the government had yet to make a decision on this matter.

Religious organizations must register at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on the mainland and with the chief government registrar on Zanzibar. Registration on Zanzibar normally took 90 days. On the mainland, the registration process sometimes took as long as four years due to vetting and investigation. In order to

register, religious organizations must provide the names of at least 10 followers, a written constitution, resumes of their leaders, and a letter of recommendation from their district commissioner. In addition, Muslim groups registering on the mainland must provide a letter of approval from BAKWATA. Muslim groups registering in Zanzibar must provide a letter of approval from the mufti--the government's official liaison to the Muslim community. Christian groups on the mainland are also required to produce letters of acknowledgement from the leaders of their denominations.

On the mainland, BAKWATA elects the mufti. On Zanzibar, the mufti is appointed by the president of Zanzibar under the 2001 Mufti Law and serves as a leader of the religious community and as a public servant who assists with local governmental affairs.

The Zanzibar mufti nominally approves all Islamic activities, including gatherings on Zanzibar, and supervises all Zanzibari mosques. The mufti also approves religious lectures by visiting clergy. The mufti also supervises the importation of Islamic literature from outside Zanzibar.

Public schools may teach religion, but it is not part of the national curriculum. Parents or volunteers teach religion on an occasional basis. School administration or parent and teacher associations must approve the classes. Many private schools and universities are associated with religious institutions. There is an Islamic university in Morogoro, a Catholic university in Mwanza, a Lutheran university in Dar es Salaam, a Baha'i secondary school in Iringa, and numerous Islamic and Christian primary and secondary schools throughout the country.

The government does not designate religion on passports or records of vital statistics; however, it requires religion to be stated in police reports in cases where individuals may be asked to give sworn testimony. The government also requires children to indicate a religion on school registration forms so children can be assigned to the appropriate religion class if the school offers religious instruction, and on applications for medical care in order that any specific religious custom may be observed.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Maulid, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Hajj, and Christmas.

Government Practices

There were reports of abuses of religious freedom.

Politicians were restricted by the Code of Ethics in the Political Parties Act from using language intended to incite one religious group against another or encouraging religious groups to vote for certain political parties. In September the police arrested two opposition Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) Members of Parliament for using language that allegedly prompted their supporters to assault Fatuma Kimario, District Commissioner of Igunga. During a scuffle at a campaign meeting, the assailants tore off Kimario's hijab head dress. Some local Muslim leaders then encouraged their congregations not to vote for CHADEMA, calling the party an enemy of Islam. BAKWATA also publicly condemned CHADEMA and described the hijab as an official and mandatory dress for a Muslim woman. CHADEMA legal advisor Dr. Abdallah Safari refuted claims that CHADEMA is a Christian party and asked Muslim leaders to refrain from using religion to incite conflict between the party and the public.

The Political Parties Act prohibits preaching or distributing material considered as inflammatory or that represented a threat to public order. In February, 12 people including five children were injured in Monduli, Arusha, after Pastor Richard Change of Full Salvation Church delivered a reportedly inflammatory sermon. Change's demonstration permit stipulated that his message must be peaceful, non-political, and free of insults against other religions. Spectators told reporters that Change and his hosts, evangelists Sospeter Makongo and Raymond Bantu, spoke against Islam, Muslims, and the prophet Mohammad. A local sheik reported this to the police who subsequently arrested the preachers. They were released the following day after the district commissioner obtained an agreement from them pledging to refrain from preaching against Islam. Nonetheless, the preachers' next public appearance led to a violent conflict between rally goers and local Muslims. In the fray, a Lutheran pastor was killed, and a nursery school, a Pentecostal church, an Anglican church, and a neighboring house were destroyed. The police arrested seven suspects for breach of the peace, destruction of property, and murder. Two of the preachers were arrested and charged under a provision of the Penal Code that prohibits "defaming" the faith of any other individual.

In November the mufti's office prevented a mainland Muslim group from preaching at an open air rally after the group failed to meet established conditions not to preach against Christianity or ask for donations.

During the year, the mainland MHA received 58 applications from Christian NGOs and registered 66, some of which had been pending for several years. The MHA rejected 11 applications. A ministry spokesperson said the applications were rejected due to a lack of clear objectives, a proper address, or affiliation with a credible foreign church. MHA received 16 requests for registration from Muslim organizations; 14 were approved and two are pending.

During the year in Zanzibar, the chief government registrar received 17 applications from Muslim organizations and no applications from Christian organizations. All applications were approved.

In September the media reported the burning of three churches in Mwanza region following a dispute between the Muslim community and four evangelists accused of burning a Qur'an as they prayed for the healing of a Muslim woman. The evangelists denied the accusations, saying they were burning charms used in witchcraft. Christian leaders claimed the evangelists reported the church burnings to the police but were themselves arrested and charged with burning a Qur'an. The Christian group claimed that a village executive officer had identified the arsonists, but police did not arrest them. When the evangelists appeared in court, the media reported that a crowd of people demanded their release so they could be executed according to Islamic law. The magistrate refused, and the crowd became disorderly, resulting in the arrest of 19 people. The evangelists were sent back to prison under the protection of a field force paramilitary unit. A group of Pentecostal pastors met with Mwanza regional officials to ask for fair trial for the evangelists. At the end of the year, the group was still awaiting trial.

President Kikwete met with the Interfaith Council comprised of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Baha'i, and other religious leaders to discuss intolerance among political parties during the 2010 election campaigns and the first half of 2011. President Kikwete made a statement supporting the activities of the council and publicly asked political parties to refrain from fostering conflict.

In March President Kikwete and Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda met with the Tanzania Mennonite Bishop and two missionaries from the United States to discuss peaceful relations between Muslims and Christians.

Religious organizations were banned from involvement in politics. In March, however, Muslim media outlets alleged that religious leaders were telling their followers for whom they should vote in the October general elections. While campaigning in Lindi Region on October 20, President Kikwete criticized political

and social leaders who preached religious bias during the campaigns and urged the public to reject them because they were dangerous.

There were reports that some officials favored conducting business with co-religionists.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were a few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

During the year on the mainland, there were several instances of Maasai clergymen subjected to public humiliation and beatings for refusing to circumcise their children as tradition dictates. In December local media reported that a policeman and two Moravian church officials were beaten by a crowd of 100 Maasai men in Babati, Manyara region, for taking children to the local hospital for circumcision instead of using traditional Maasai medicine men.

In Zanzibar, there were reports of five church burnings during the year. In June and July a group of Muslims allegedly burned down a Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pemba, the Free Pentecostal Church in Kianga, and the Evangelistic Assemblies of God Church. According to Pastor Boniface Kaliabukama of the Siloam church in Kianga, approximately 100 people armed with clubs, hammers, torches, and swords arrived at his church on November 24 chanting “Allahu Akbar,” or “God is Great,” before attacking the building. The church security guard ran away, and the police arrived and repeatedly fired warning shots into the air. Reportedly, they were unable to stop the mob from setting the church on fire and destroying it within three hours. The police arrested the mob leader, Mbarak Hamadi.

On December 4, members of another church, the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa, arrived for a morning worship service to find their church had been burned to the ground. The bishop later told reporters that the Zanzibar government had chosen to remain silent on church burnings.

In August Hussein Ali Kimiti, chairman of the Zanzibar bar owners association, told reporters that 10 bars were burned during the month of Ramadan. By the end of September, two more bars were also burned. Victims attributed the arson to Muslim protesters angry about the sale of alcohol during Ramadan. Muslim leaders of the UAMSHO (Revivalist) organization told government officials that

they supported the burning of bars even though they had not been involved. They asked the government to restrict alcohol sales during Ramadan. Police officials condemned the incidents and asked the public for help in identifying the responsible parties.

There were reports that some businesspersons were believed to favor conducting business with co-religionists.

Although some women traditionally take the religion of their husbands after marriage, this practice has continued to decline.

There were efforts to improve interfaith dialogue and societal tolerance during the year. For example, throughout the year the Interfaith Council helped to sponsor public fora concerning religious tolerance and the role of religion during political campaigns. Religious leaders on the council also met during the year to discuss the interfaith relationship.

In November on the mainland, UNICEF and the Global Network for the Religion of Children (GNRC), an interfaith network of organizations and individuals dedicated to the rights of children, convened more than 2,000 mainland and Zanzibari children of different religions to pray and advocate for children's rights through music, drama, and poetry.

Speaking at an iftar dinner in Zanzibar, Sheikh Soraga, Executive Director of the Office of the Mufti, urged Muslims to be tolerant of non-Muslims and to accept support from them as the Prophet Muhammad did.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. embassy engaged with religious groups in order to continue to encourage peaceful relationships among them.

During the year, the embassy partnered with members of the Tanzania-United States Department of State Alumni Association in several Muslim youth outreach programs, including Earth Day and World Heart Day. The embassy also conducted school visits and donated books and sporting equipment to predominantly Muslim schools in the regions of Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Lindi, and Kilwa. The embassy sponsors three American Corners, cultural information centers where visitors can check out books and watch films about American

culture and values. In addition to the American Corner in Mwanza, the embassy supported two American Corners in predominantly-Muslim Zanzibar.

In Zanzibar, the ambassador and embassy Zanzibar affairs officer met repeatedly with the mufti, and, during Ramadan, the mission sponsored an iftar dinner. At the dinner, the mufti discussed religious tolerance and encouraged Muslims to work together with people of other faiths.