

SAINT LUCIA

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 no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom.

The U.S. government discussed religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Members of the embassy met with all sectors of civil society and engaged in discussions on religious freedom on a regular basis.

Section I. Religious Demography

Christianity is the dominant religion. According to the 2010 population and housing census, Roman Catholics account for approximately 61.1 percent of the population; Seventh-day Adventists, 10.4 percent; Pentecostals, 8.8 percent; evangelicals, 2.2 percent; Baptists, 2.1 percent; and Rastafarians, 2 percent. Other groups that constitute less than 5 percent of the population include Anglicans, the members of the Church of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, Methodists, Muslims, and Baha'is. Nearly 6 percent of the population claims no religious affiliation.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom.

The government is secular and does not interfere with an individual's right to worship. The government maintains an active relationship with the Christian Council, an organization consisting of representatives of the Catholic Church and mainstream Protestant denominations.

The government implemented a revised registration policy for religious organizations. Official recognition allows a religious organization to have duty-free import privileges and exemption from some labor requirements. The policy also contains provision for regulating missionary work and labor permits, and it includes regulation of non-denominational organizations.

The public school curriculum includes Christian education; however, non-Christian students are not required to participate. There also are private schools sponsored by the Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, and Anglican churches.

The government prohibits the use of marijuana, including for religious purposes. Rastafarians complained that marijuana is integral to their religious rituals.

The government observes Christmas as a national holiday.

Government Practices

There were no reports of abuses of religious freedom.

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, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom. Rastafarians, however, complained of discrimination, especially in hiring and in schools.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discussed religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Members of the U.S. embassy met with members of nongovernmental organizations, religious charitable organizations, and business leaders as a part of the embassy's regular engagement with members of civil society.