

GUINEA-BISSAU 2012 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally respected religious freedom. The trend in the government's respect for religious freedom did not change significantly during the year.

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

There is no permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in the country. Representatives of the U.S. embassy in Dakar discussed religious freedom with the government.

Section I. Religious Demography

The World Bank estimates the population is 1.5 million. Approximately 50 percent follows indigenous religious practices. Forty percent is Muslim, and 10 percent is Christian.

The Fula (Peuhl or Fulani) and Mandinka ethnic groups are the most numerous followers of Islam. Muslims generally live in the north and northeast, and most Muslims are Sunni. Adherents of indigenous religious beliefs generally live in all but the northern parts of the country. The Christian population, including Roman Catholics and Protestants, is concentrated in Bissau and other large towns.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom.

The government requires that religious groups obtain licenses, and the government issued them routinely.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Good Friday, Easter, All Saints' Day, Tabaski (Abraham's sacrifice), and Christmas.

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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.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

There was no permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in the country. Representatives from the embassy in Dakar, Senegal, discussed religious freedom with the government of Guinea-Bissau.