

TANZANIA 2013 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and the government generally respected religious freedom.

There were reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. There was an increase in attacks on religious leaders and on houses of worship as well as heightened tensions between Muslim and Christian communities.

The U.S. Ambassador and embassy staff discussed religious freedom and promoted tolerance with government officials, religious leaders, and the general public. The embassy signed grants for local projects which support interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Embassy officers also advocated to the government for legal action against the perpetrators of attacks on religious leaders and houses of worship, and provided support to enhance capacity of local law enforcement.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 48.3 million (July 2013 estimate). Most religious leaders estimate that the population is 50 percent Christian and 50 percent Muslim. A 2010 Pew Forum survey estimates that approximately 60 percent of the population is Christian, 36 percent is Muslim, and 4 percent belongs to other religious groups.

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

The country's three largest political parties are secular, but include the opposition Civic United Front party, often associated with Zanzibar's Muslim community, and the opposition Chadema party, often associated with the Christian majority on the mainland.

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Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution and other laws and policies generally protect religious freedom. The constitution stipulates freedom of conscience, faith, and choice for all, including the freedom to change one's religion or faith, and that all are entitled to equal protection under the law without discrimination, including on the basis of religion.

The law prohibits religious groups from registering as political parties.

Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous archipelago. While Zanzibar has its own president, constitution, court system, and legislature, it is also subject to the Tanzanian constitution and its religious freedom provisions. The Zanzibar constitution and Zanzibar's laws and policies generally protect religious freedom. Its constitution stipulates that every person has freedom of thought or conscience, belief or faith, and choice, including the freedom to change religion or faith and that all are entitled to equal protection under the law without discrimination, including on the basis of religion.

On the mainland, secular laws govern Christians and Muslims in both criminal and civil cases except for family-related cases involving inheritance, marriage, divorce and the adoption of minors, where Muslims may choose Islamic law. In 16 mainland regions, a kadhi court system hears civil cases concerning Muslims. Judges trained in Islamic legal traditions administer the kadhi courts. If the parties do not agree with a kadhi court decision, magistrate courts hear the cases.

In Zanzibar, Muslims have a parallel system of kadhi courts for matters of divorce, child custody, inheritance, and other issues covered by Islamic law. All cases tried in Zanzibar courts, except those involving constitutional matters 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 president of Zanzibar appoints the chief kadhi, who oversees the kadhi courts and is recognized as the senior Islamic scholar responsible for interpreting the Quran.

Religious groups must register with the Ministry of Home Affairs on the mainland and with the Chief Registrar on Zanzibar. To register, religious groups must

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provide the names of at least 10 members, 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 the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (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 must produce letters of acknowledgement from the leaders of their denominations.

On the mainland, BAKWATA elects the mufti. On Zanzibar, the president of Zanzibar appoints the mufti, who serves as a leader of the Muslim community and as a public servant assisting with local governmental affairs.

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

Public schools may teach religion, but it is not a part of the national curriculum. School administration or parent and teacher associations must approve such classes, taught on an occasional basis by parents or volunteers. Many private schools and universities are associated with religious groups. There is an Islamic university in Morogoro, a Roman Catholic university in Mwanza, a Lutheran university in Dar es Salaam, a Bahai 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. Police reports must state religious affiliation if an individual will have to give sworn testimony. Public school registration forms must specify a child's religious affiliation so administrators can assign students to the appropriate religion class if one is offered. Students may also choose to opt out of religious studies. Applications for medical care also must specify religious affiliation so that any specific religious custom may be observed.

Government Practices

The government restricted religious speech through enforcement of media laws, with the stated intention of reducing religious tensions in the country.

On February 26, the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) suspended operations of two religious radio stations, Imani FM and Kwa Neema

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FM, for six months. TCRA imposed this suspension as a penalty for the airing of programs which it judged could have led to a breach of peace. Imani FM, based in Morogoro Municipality, was alleged to have aired programs in August 2012 with the intent to persuade Muslims not to participate in the national census which took place that month. Kwa Neema FM radio, based in Mwanza City, was alleged to have aired programs aimed at encouraging Christians not to eat meat slaughtered by Muslims. The issue of meat slaughtering led to violent conflict between Christians and Muslims in February.

On February 16, Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda met with Muslim and Christian leaders in Mwanza and Geita regions to resolve escalating tension between the two groups over animal slaughtering. Pinda issued a temporary ban on Christians slaughtering animals and formed a committee of religious leaders to look for a permanent solution.

Government leaders spoke out several times during the year to support respect for religious freedom in response to a perceived increase in religious tensions in Tanzania. President Kikwete used regular radio addresses and public speeches to encourage religious and political leaders to take seriously their responsibility to ensure that citizens continue to live peacefully regardless of their religion, as well as their ethnicity, color, or place of origin.

On March 23, Zanzibar President Ali Mohamed Shein called upon religious leaders in Tanzania to advocate peace and unity and to use dialogue and arbitration as a means of resolving differences. In August the Zanzibar Interfaith Joint Committee, which includes prominent Muslim and Christian leaders and is organized under the government's office of the mufti, began meeting again after a period of inactivity since 2012.

Government officials stated that during the year they had reduced the backlog of registration applications by religious groups reported in 2012, but did not offer any statistics on registration applications pending or approved.

Government Inaction

Limitations on the government's technical, financial, and human capacity resulted in a failure to successfully prosecute perpetrators of religious freedom abuses. By year's end there had been no convictions related to religious freedom abuses reported in that or previous years, including the shooting of two Catholic priests, the acid attack on a Muslim cleric, or various attacks on houses of worship. In one

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case from May, however, the government made an arrest and a trial was underway at year's end.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were reports of societal abuses based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Attacks on religious leaders and houses of worship may have been driven by a combination of religious, political, economic, and criminal motivations.

On May 5, a bomb blast at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in the Arusha area killed three people and seriously injured more than 40 persons. The papal nuncio to Tanzania, Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla, and the Archbishop of Arusha were attending to oversee the church's official opening mass, but neither was harmed. On December 27 Archbishop Padilla returned to Arusha and re-inaugurated the church under tight security. Police arrested one suspect in the May bombing and by year's end the trial was ongoing.

On February 11, Muslim youths in the Mwanza area clashed with a group of Christians who had slaughtered a cow and two goats to be sold at a local market. The violent conflict resulted in the death of Pastor Mathayo Machila, the injury of several others and significant property damage. Traditionally, Muslims have been the ones who slaughtered animals for public consumption in order to ensure compliance with halal requirements. Police investigation led to several arrests and by year's end the cases remained in the court.

On February 17, Catholic priest Father Evaristus Mushi was shot and killed in Zanzibar. The police investigation led to the arrest of one suspect. At year's end, the suspect remained in custody and the case was still pending.

On September 13, a Catholic priest, Reverend Joseph Anselmo Mwangamba, was attacked with acid in the Stone Town area of Zanzibar and critically injured. By year's end the perpetrator had not been apprehended or identified.

On October 31 residents of Lulago village in Kilindi District reportedly burned down a mosque belonging to the Ansar Sunnah group as well as 16 houses reportedly used by armed assailants who had fled to the forest after allegedly killing a militiaman. Reportedly tensions had been flaring between members of the Ansar Sunnah mosque and the villagers, who claimed the Ansar Sunnah members settled in the village in 2009 without the consent of the village government.

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On August 23, unidentified persons threw home-made explosives (three bottles filled with gasoline and paraffin) at an Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania building in the Dar es Salaam area during a worship service. The building did not catch fire, and worshippers escaped unharmed.

On October 20, unidentified persons set fire to a Baptist Church altar in the Vingunguti area. Church members and neighbors extinguished the fire before it caused serious damage. By year's end no motivation for the attack had been determined and no suspect had been identified.

On June 2, a large group of people attacked the home of Evangelical Assemblies of God Pastor Robert Ngai in Geita Town. The attackers broke into the home and attacked Ngai with machetes. Ngai received serious cuts on his hands. Police investigated, but by year's end there had been no arrests.

Civil society organizations promoting interfaith tolerance and cooperation work freely throughout the country. For example, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), an international, interfaith NGO, worked with mosques and churches during the year to promote religious tolerance by supporting income-generation projects among religious groups in different districts across the country. The Zanzibar Interfaith Center is active on the islands in promoting interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and cooperation.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. embassy engaged with government officials and religious leaders to promote religious tolerance and encourage legal action against perpetrators of religiously-based violence.

The Ambassador issued public statements condemning violent attacks against religious leaders and houses of worship, calling on authorities to fully investigate and prosecute the cases, and urging the public to build on the values of tolerance, unity, and peace.

Embassy representatives met regularly with religious leaders, emphasizing the importance of religious tolerance and encouraging leaders to make public statements condemning religiously-motivated attacks. The embassy offered technical and capacity-building support to Tanzanian law enforcement to enhance the government's capabilities to take adequate measures to protect citizens and pursue justice for human rights abuses.

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The embassy supported the rehabilitation of the largest Anglican Cathedral in Stone Town, on the island of Unguja in Zanzibar. The Cathedral, which sits on the site of the former Zanzibar slave market, remains a key symbol of the tradition of religious tolerance within Zanzibari society. The \$78,000 grant, signed in September, was given through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. The project was designed to train and employ Muslim artisans in the community to restore and renovate the Cathedral, thereby producing a model that demonstrates Muslim-Christian cooperation.

In September the embassy signed a \$150,000 grant to support efforts to counter violent extremism in youth populations in Zanzibar. The grant will support activities at two youth centers in Stone Town, which aim to engage youth and community police with local interfaith and human rights organizations.