

# **MARSHALL ISLANDS**

## **2013 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.

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

U.S. embassy staff consulted with government officials and local religious group leaders regarding religious freedom and attended the opening of the country's first mosque.

### **Section I. Religious Demography**

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 70,000 (July 2013 estimate). Major religious groups include the United Church of Christ (formerly Congregational), with 52 percent of the population; the Assemblies of God, 24 percent; the Roman Catholic Church, 9 percent; and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), 8 percent. Groups together constituting less than 7 percent include Bukot Non Jesus (also known as Assembly of God Part Two), Full Gospel, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Bahais, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, and Ahmadi Muslims.

### **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 provides for the free exercise of religion and equal protection under the law, regardless of religious beliefs. There are no legislative restrictions on religious practices. Although there is no official state religion, Christianity is the dominant social and cultural influence. Governmental functions typically begin and end with an ordained minister or other church official delivering a Christian prayer.

## **MARSHALL ISLANDS**

There are no requirements for the registration of religious groups, nor are there any penalties for failure to register.

There is no religious education in public schools and no opening or closing prayers during the school day. However, most extracurricular school events begin and end with an interdenominational Christian prayer.

### **Government Practices**

There were no reports of significant government actions affecting religious freedom.

The government subsidized religious schools based on enrollment and accreditation.

### **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**

Embassy officials discussed religious freedom with the government and occasionally met with local religious group leaders and foreign missionaries. The Ambassador and embassy representatives also met with faith-based NGOs, including Canvasback Missions, and Humanity First USA Medical Missions to learn more about their work.