

# **DOMINICA 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 representatives discussed religious freedom with government officials, including the attorney general, and with the Red Cross of Dominica and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including religious charitable organizations.

## **Section I. Religious Demography**

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 73,000 (July 2013 estimate). The 2001 census indicates approximately 61 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. Seventh-day Adventists and Pentecostals comprise 6 percent each, and Baptists and Methodists 4 percent each. Other small religious groups include Anglicans, Bahais, Christian Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Nazarenes, Rastafarians and members of the Church of Christ. Six percent of the population professes no religious affiliation.

## **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 freedom of religion, freedom to practice religion, freedom of thought, and freedom from oaths contrary to one's beliefs. By law the government may make exceptions to these freedoms in the interests of public order and morality as "reasonably required."

Religious groups seeking non-profit status must register with the attorney general's office. Any organization denied permission to register has the right to apply for judicial review. By law religious groups must register buildings used exclusively as places of worship with the registrar general, if banns of marriage are published there.

## **DOMINICA**

Christian prayer takes place during morning assembly in public schools, although non-Christian students are not required to participate.

The government subsidizes teacher salaries at schools affiliated with the Catholic, Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist churches.

The government prohibits the use of marijuana, including for religious purposes.

### **Government Practices**

Rastafarians complained about the government's prohibition of marijuana use, which they described as integral to their religious rituals.

### **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**

U.S. embassy officials discussed religious freedom with the government and NGOs, including religious charitable organizations. Embassy officers met specifically with the attorney general and the Red Cross to discuss the status of religious freedom.