

SAN MARINO 2015 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The law prohibits religious discrimination, prevents restrictions on religious freedom, and includes provisions for prosecuting religious hate crimes. Catholic religious instruction is offered in all public schools, but the law guarantees the right of nonparticipation without penalty. Taxpayers could designate that 0.3 percent of their income tax be allocated to the Catholic Church or other religious groups registered as nonprofit organizations. Catholic symbols were common in state buildings.

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

During periodic visits, officials from the U.S. Consulate General in Florence emphasized U.S. support for religious tolerance with government leaders and civil society representatives.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 33,000 (July 2015 estimate). The local government does not provide statistics on the size of religious groups, and there is no census data on religious group membership, but government officials stated that the vast majority of the population is Roman Catholic; other religious groups include small numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahais, Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, and members of the Waldensian Church. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the number of Orthodox Church members has increased in recent years due to immigration from Eastern Europe.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

Constitutional law is governed by a combination of historical and modern texts. The law prohibits religious-based discrimination and restrictions on religious freedom, except for the protection of public order and general welfare, and includes provisions for prosecuting hate crimes and speech that defiles religious groups.

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The law allows taxpayers to specify that 0.3 percent of their income tax payments be allocated to the Catholic Church or to other religious groups or charities registered as nonprofit organizations. If a taxpayer allocates a portion of his or her income tax payment to a previously unregistered group, the tax authorities will contact the group to confirm its legitimacy and to review its financial statements.

There are no private religious schools, and the law requires religious education in public schools. Only Catholic religious instruction is offered in school, but the state-approved curriculum includes comparisons between Christianity and other religions and between the Bible and other religious texts. The law also guarantees students the right to choose not to participate in religious instruction without penalty. Students (or the parents, if the student is under 18) must choose to opt out at the beginning of each school year.

Government Practices

Catholic symbols were common in government buildings. For example, crucifixes hung on courtroom and government office walls. The government maintained a public meditation and prayer site in the capital for use by worshipers of any religion.

In August the government organized an interreligious dialogue that brought together Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim leaders to discuss the role of religion in society.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

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

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

During periodic visits, the Consul General and other representatives from the U.S. Consulate General in Florence discussed U.S. policies in support of religious freedom with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consulate general representatives also discussed U.S. support for religious freedom with civil society representatives, including labor unions and the U.S.-San Marino Association.