

MONACO 2016 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and its public expression and prohibits compelling participation in religious ceremonies. Roman Catholicism is the state religion and state ceremonies often included Catholic rituals. Religious groups had to apply to the Minister of Interior to build a public place of worship. Optional Catholic religious instruction was available in public schools.

The only private religious schools were Catholic. According to the government, there was insufficient demand for non-Catholic private religious schools

U.S. government officials and an embassy officer met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to discuss religious freedom policies.

Section I. Religious Demography

According to U.S. government sources, the total population is 31,000 (July 2016 estimate), of whom 7,600 are citizens. The Catholic archdiocese estimates that 90 percent of citizens are Catholic, while 2 percent are Protestant. According to the archdiocese, most of the estimated 22,900 noncitizen residents are either Catholic or Protestant, approximately 1,000 are Jewish, and a smaller number are Muslim or adhere to other religious beliefs.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

The constitution guarantees individuals the freedom of religion and public worship and protects the freedom to express opinions on all issues, provided no crimes are committed in the exercise of those freedoms. No one may be compelled to participate in the rites or ceremonies of any religion or to observe its days of rest.

The constitution states Roman Catholicism is the state religion.

Any religious group wishing to construct a place of worship in a public space must register a request with the Ministry of Interior. There are several Catholic churches and synagogues, and one Protestant church.

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Catholic religious instruction is available in schools as an option requiring parental authorization. Private schools may provide religious instruction for religions other than Catholicism.

The country is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Government Practices

Catholic ritual generally continued to play a role in state ceremonies, including annual national day celebrations.

While the government's stated policy was to consider non-Catholic religious groups' requests to build public places of worship on a case-by-case basis, the government reported it did not receive any requests for new sites.

Although there were no mosques and no groups had requested to build one, some Muslim residents worshipped in private prayer rooms built inside their own residences, a practice acceptable to the government, according to MFA officials.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

The only private religious schools were Catholic. According to the MFA, there was insufficient demand for private schools offering instruction in other religions.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

A representative from the U.S. Consulate General in Marseille and a U.S. Department of State official met with MFA officials late in the year and discussed religious freedom policies in the country.