

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom.

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 104 square miles and a population of 46,000. Christianity is the dominant religion. An estimated 50 percent of the population adheres to Anglican beliefs, and 25 percent is Roman Catholic. There are Methodists, Moravians, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Rastafarians, Muslims, Hindus, and members of the Bahai Faith. Evangelical Christian groups are gaining followers. There is no organized Jewish community.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections. The government is secular and did not interfere with an individual's right to worship.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for registering religious groups.

There were two Catholic schools and a Seventh-day Adventist school. The government did not contribute financially to these schools. The government requires all schools to conduct morning Christian prayers and hymns.

The government prohibits the use of marijuana, including for religious purposes. Rastafarians complained that marijuana is integral to their religious rituals.

The government observes the following religious holidays as national holidays: Good Friday, Easter, Whit Monday, and Christmas.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

There were no reports of abuses, including religious prisoners or detainees, in the country.

Section III. Status of Societal Actions Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom. Rastafarians, however, complained of discrimination, especially in hiring and in schools.

The Saint Kitts Christian Council, which included Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and other traditional Christian religious groups, conducted activities to promote greater mutual understanding and respect among different Christian denominations. The Evangelical Association united 11 churches in the evangelical community and promoted their interests.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Representatives of the U.S. embassy also discussed religious freedom with local religious leaders.