

BARBADOS

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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 166 square miles and a population of 280,000. According to the 2000 official census, more than 95 percent of the population is Christian; however, a recent estimate cites 75 percent. Anglicans number 70,000 members; Seventh-day Adventists, 16,000; Roman Catholics, 11,000; Pentecostals, 7,000; Methodists, 5,000; and Jehovah's Witnesses, 2,500. There are small numbers of Baptists, Moravians, and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

The number of non-Christians is small. There are 4,000 Muslims, most of whom trace their ancestry to the Indian state of Gujarat. A few immigrants from Guyana, Trinidad, South Asia, and the Middle East, as well as approximately 200 native-born persons, constitute the rest of the growing Muslim community. There are three mosques and an Islamic center. Other religious groups include Rastafarians, Hindus, Buddhists, and members of the Bahai Faith.

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>.

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Religious groups are required to register with the government to obtain duty-free import privileges or tax benefits.

Religious instruction is included in the public school curriculum as "values education." The focus is on Christianity, but representatives from other religious groups also were invited to speak to students.

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 Monday, 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 Barbados Christian Council and the Caribbean Conference of Churches conducted activities to promote greater mutual understanding and respect among adherents of different Christian denominations.

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. U.S. embassy representatives also discussed religious freedom with local groups and other organizations.