

GRENADA 2016 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution protects freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and religion. The criminal code prohibits written blasphemous language. The government continued to fund public schools administered by long-established Christian groups, including the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mennonite communities.

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

Embassy officials engaged government officials and members of the country's religious communities to discuss religious freedom in law and in practice.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 111,000 (July 2016 estimate). The U.S. government estimates that 44.6 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 11.5 percent Anglican, 11.3 percent Pentecostal, 10.5 percent Seventh-day Adventist, 2.9 percent Baptist, and 2.6 percent Church of God. Religious groups with totals of 2 percent or less of the population include Methodists, evangelical Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Rastafarians. Smaller groups include Brethren, Bahais, Hindus, Moravians, Muslims, Mennonites, and members of the Salvation Army and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). There is a small Jewish community. Those belonging to no religion represent 3.6 percent of the population.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

The constitution protects "freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion." It guarantees the right to change one's religion and to manifest and propagate it. The constitution prohibits forced participation in any religious ceremony or instruction.

The government allows religious headdress of certain types in photographs for national identity documents, provided the face is visible and not shadowed. The criminal code prohibits written blasphemous language.

The government funds public schools administered by Christian groups, including the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mennonite communities. In accordance with the constitution's protections for freedom of conscience and religion, students at such schools are not obliged to attend religion classes, and alternatives to religion classes are available. Public funding is not limited to these groups. The government provides subsidies to denominational schools, which are managed by a board of directors and staffed by the faith-based organization to which they are aligned.

In order for religious groups to qualify for customs and tax exemptions, they must be recognized as nonprofit organizations, register with the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office (CAIPO) and Inland Revenue, and provide a letter of request to the Ministry of Finance. Applications are routinely granted. Recognition as a nonprofit requires the group to submit details to CAIPO regarding the organization, including information on directors, location of activities, and the general nature of its activities.

Foreign missionaries require a worker's permit costing 1000 to 5000 East Caribbean dollars (\$370 to \$1,852) or a waiver costing 100 East Caribbean dollars (\$37) from the Minister of Labor. They must demonstrate prior experience and be sponsored by a registered religious group.

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

Government Practices

The government continued to fund public schools administered by long-established Christian groups, including the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventist, and Mennonite communities.

In November voters defeated all seven proposals of a constitutional referendum, including a Rights and Freedom bill that would have provided greater protection of fundamental rights, including on the basis of religion.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Religious Affairs organized meetings for all faith-based organizations to discuss areas for collaboration with the government to "improve national society." One of the discussion topics was working with the government to combat the growing incidences of heart disease, diabetes, and

certain types of cancer by educating congregants on how to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

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

Embassy officials engaged government officials and members of the country's religious communities to discuss religious freedom in law and in practice.