

# **MONACO 2015 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT**

## **Executive Summary**

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and freedom to express opinions on religious subjects. Roman Catholicism is the state religion and state ceremonies often include Catholic rituals. The government recognizes Christianity, Islam, and Judaism as religions and considers registration of other religious groups on a case-by-case basis. In August Prince Albert issued a formal apology to Jewish Holocaust victims and dedicated a memorial at the national cemetery.

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

The U.S. Consul General in Marseille met with religious leaders to discuss their views on religious freedom.

## **Section I. Religious Demography**

According to U.S. government sources, the total population is 31,000 (July 2015 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, including on religion, 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. Catholic religious instruction is available in schools as an option requiring parental authorization.

### **Government Practices**

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The government recognized Christianity, Islam, and Judaism as religions and considered registration of others on a case-by-case basis. It did not maintain an official list of banned groups, but its policy was to deny registration to those considered to be involved in “dangerous” sectarian activity as defined by the French government’s Inter-Ministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations. Groups denied registration could not practice their religion.

Catholic ritual generally played a role in state ceremonies, including the annual National Day celebrations.

In August Prince Albert formally apologized and asked for forgiveness for the deportation of Jews from the country to Nazi camps during World War II. He dedicated a memorial at the national cemetery to the victims. The prince’s gesture of regret was welcomed by European Jewish Congress President, Dr. Moshe Kantor.

The Commission to Assist Victims of Despoilment (CAVS), created in 2006, continued its efforts to compensate Jewish victims whose property was seized by Nazi Germany. During the year CAVS received 14 claims, and awarded settlements to eight claimants that ranged from 20,000 to 390,000 euros (\$21,763–\$424,374). CAVS denied three claims and was still investigating three more.

### **Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom**

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

### **Section IV. U.S. Government Policy**

The U.S. Consul General in Marseille met with members of religious groups to discuss their views on issues of religious freedom.