

## DOMINICA

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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 291 square miles and a population of 72,000. According to the 2001 population and housing census, approximately 61 percent of the population is Roman Catholic; Seventh-day Adventists and Pentecostals represent 6 percent each; and Baptists and Methodists 4 percent each. There are also Anglicans, members of the Bahai Faith, Christian Brethren, Church of Christ, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Nazarenes, and Rastafarians. Six percent of the population claims no religious affiliation.

### 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 does not interfere with an individual's right to worship. The government maintained active relationships with religious groups.

The government requires all religious organizations to register with the Attorney General's Office as nonprofit organizations; they also must register their buildings through the government registrar. Such recognition affects a religious group's nonprofit organization status, its ability to hold public meetings, and the work status of its missionaries. Any organization denied permission to register has the right to apply for judicial review.

The public school curriculum included Christian education, and students were led in prayer during morning assembly. Non-Christian students were not required to participate. There were Catholic, Methodist, and Seventh-day Adventist schools, and the government subsidized teacher salaries at religiously affiliated schools.

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 Sunday, 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 schools.

#### 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.