

GRENADA 2017 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution protects freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and religion. The criminal code prohibits the publishing and sale of blasphemous language; however, the code is not enforced. The government continued to fund public schools administered by long-established Christian groups, including the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mennonite communities. Denominational and ecumenical Christian worship services continued to form part of official festivities on national holidays.

Members of the Jewish and Muslim communities said they met regularly in their respective places of worship and celebrated their religious holidays. The Conference of Churches, an ecumenical body, continued to serve as a forum to promote mutual understanding between religious organizations and hosted interfaith speakers at its meetings. In October a visiting imam from the United Kingdom addressed the group to foster greater understanding among Jews, Christians, Muslims, and other religions.

The Ambassador and the Principal Officer engaged the government on the importance of respect for religious freedom and tolerance and participated in government events that promoted respect for these values. Embassy officials also met with members of the various religious communities to discuss their views on respect for religious diversity and tolerance in the country. The Principal Officer also participated in denominational, ecumenical, Muslim, and Jewish community events to emphasize U.S. government commitment to these issues.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 112,000 (July 2017 estimate). According to the U.S. government (2011 estimate), 49.2 percent of the population identifies as Protestant (includes Pentecostal 17.2 percent; Seventh-day Adventist 13.2 percent; Anglican 8.5 percent; Baptist 3.2 percent; Church of God 2.4 percent; evangelical Protestant 1.9 percent; Methodist 1.6 percent; and other 1.2 percent). Approximately 36 percent identifies as Roman Catholic; 1.2 percent as Jehovah's Witnesses; 1.2 percent as Rastafarian; 5.5 percent as other; 5.7 percent as none; and 1.3 percent as unspecified. Smaller groups include Brethren, Bahais, Hindus, Moravians, Muslims, Mennonites, The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and members of The Salvation Army. There is also a small Jewish community.

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 head coverings of certain types, including the hijab and the Rastafarian head wrap, in photographs for national identity documents, provided the face is visible and not shadowed. The criminal code prohibits written blasphemous language; however, the government does not enforce the law.

The government subsidizes all existing denominational private schools, which are managed by a board of directors and staffed by the faith-based organization to which they are aligned. The government also funds public schools administered by religious groups, including the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mennonite communities. There are no non-Christian denominational schools. In accordance with the constitution’s protections for freedom of conscience and religion, students at such schools may attend religion classes and may use credits from those classes towards completion of the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate.

To qualify for customs and tax exemptions, the government must recognize a religious group as a nongovernmental organization (NGO). The group must also register with the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office (CAIPO) and with the Inland Revenue Office in the Ministry of Finance and provide a letter of request to the ministry. The attorney general grants final approval, and the ministry grants the applications for tax exemptions. Applications are routinely granted. Recognition as an NGO requires the group to submit details to CAIPO regarding the organization, including information about its directors, as well as a description of the NGO’s general activities and the location of these activities.

Foreign missionaries require a worker’s permit costing 1,000 to 5,000 East Caribbean dollars (\$370 to \$1,900) or a waiver costing 100 East Caribbean dollars

(\$37) from the Ministry of Labor. They must demonstrate prior experience, and a registered religious group must sponsor them.

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

Government Practices

The Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Religious Affairs organized joint meetings with all faith-based organizations to discuss areas for collaboration with the government to “improve national society.”

The government’s official declarations, speeches, and activities often included religious references; denominational and ecumenical Christian worship services were part of official festivities on national holidays. The governor general, prime minister, other senior government officials, members of clergy and civil society, and members of the public participated in an official service of thanksgiving, organized by the Grenada Council of Churches, to mark the anniversary of the U.S. intervention and the fall of the country’s revolutionary government on October 25, 1983.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

Members of non-Christian congregations said they were able to worship openly. Members of the Muslim and Jewish communities stated they met regularly in their respective places of worship and celebrated their religious holidays. The Conference of Churches Grenada, an ecumenical body, continued to serve as a forum to promote mutual understanding between religious organizations and hosted interfaith speakers at meetings. In October a visiting imam from the United Kingdom addressed the group on his work to foster greater understanding among Jews, Christians, Muslims, and other religions. The imam also spoke about his school/institute, an interfaith school where they teach children tolerance for other religions from an early age.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

The Ambassador and the Principal Officer engaged the government on the importance of respect for religious diversity, freedom, and tolerance.

The Principal Officer participated in denominational, ecumenical, and Muslim and Jewish community events to emphasize the importance of respect for religious

diversity, tolerance, and equality under law, as well as participating in and giving remarks at an official service of thanksgiving, organized by the Grenada Council of Churches.