

# **SAN MARINO 2018 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT**

## **Executive Summary**

The law prohibits religious discrimination, prevents restrictions on religious freedom, and includes provisions for prosecuting religious hate crimes. An agreement with the Holy See, ratified in September, confirmed Catholic religious instruction must be offered in all public schools, but the law guarantees the right of nonparticipation without penalty. Catholic symbols remained common in government buildings. In August at a Catholic-organized annual conference in Rimini, Italy, the foreign minister advocated dialogue and religious freedom while on a panel with the secretary general of the Muslim World League.

In June a local bank organized a conference on interreligious dialogue, and, in October the University of San Marino participated in an event to remember the introduction of anti-Semitic “racial laws” in Italy and San Marino in 1938.

During periodic visits, officials from the U.S. Consulate General in Florence, Italy, continued to stress the importance of religious tolerance in meetings with staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Section I. Religious Demography**

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 34,000 (July 2018 estimate). While it does not collect statistics on the size of religious groups, the local government continues to report the vast majority of the population is Roman Catholic. Other religious groups present include Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Baha’i Faith, Islam, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, and the Waldensian Church.

## **Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom**

### **Legal Framework**

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and prohibits religious-based discrimination and restrictions on religious freedom, except for the protection of public order and general welfare. The criminal code provides for possible prison terms of six months to three years for any discrimination, including that based on religion. Discrimination on the basis of religion can also constitute an aggravating circumstance for other types of crime. In these cases, the penalty may be increased. The law includes provisions for prosecuting hate crimes and speech that

defiles religious groups, with violators subject to imprisonment from three months to one year.

The law forbids media professionals from generating and spreading information that may discriminate against someone on the basis of religion, among other factors. Anyone may report a case to the Authority for Information, a government body, which may take disciplinary action. The authority may issue sanctions for a violation of the code, ranging from a warning to censure, suspension, and/or removal from the professional register. These sanctions are in addition to the ones already provided in the criminal code.

The law allows taxpayers to allocate 0.3 percent of their income tax payments to the Catholic Church or to other religious or secular groups recognized as nonprofit organizations. Religious organizations must be legally recognized in the country to receive this benefit. To obtain legal recognition, religious organizations are required to submit evidence to the government of nonprofit activities and annual reports. The government may periodically audit and inspect organizations, require them to submit additional documentation, and investigate any complaints from organization members or third parties.

There are no private religious schools, and the law requires religious education in public schools. Only Catholic religious instruction is offered in public schools. In September the country ratified a bilateral agreement with the Holy See that granted Catholic instruction equal status with other subjects taught in schools. The agreement also stipulates the Catholic curriculum will be subject to a future agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Catholic Bishop of San Marino-Montefeltro. The current state-approved Catholic curriculum includes comparisons between Christianity and other religions and between the Bible and other religious texts. Teachers are selected by the church and may be religious or lay. Religious instruction is funded by the government. The law guarantees students the right to opt out of religious instruction without penalty. Students (or the parents, if the student is younger than 18) must choose to opt out at the beginning of each school year.

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

### **Government Practices**

As of 2017, the last year for which data were available, approximately 110 nonprofit organizations (down from 130 in the previous year) received

contributions from taxpayers in accordance with the law. The government did not indicate how many of these organizations were religious, but among them were the Catholic Church, a number of Catholic associations, and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Catholic symbols remained common in government buildings. Crucifixes continued to hang on courtroom and government office walls. The government continued to maintain a public meditation and prayer site in the capital for use by worshippers of any religion.

In August Foreign Affairs Minister Nicola Renzi advocated dialogue and religious freedom at an annual event organized by an Italian Catholic movement in Rimini, Italy. His conference panel included the secretary general of the Muslim World League.

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

On June 27, local bank Banca di San Marino and bank foundation Ente Cassa di Faetano organized a conference in the country on interreligious dialogue and the history of relations between the Catholic Church and Islam. Approximately 100 persons attended, including journalists.

On October 3, the state-run University of San Marino participated in an event organized by the University of Bologna's campus in Rimini, Italy, the city of Rimini, and the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris, to remember the 80th anniversary of the Italian and Sammarinese Fascist governments' introduction of the anti-Semitic Racial Laws. Among several other academic presentations on the history of the laws, a professor from the University of San Marino gave remarks on their application in San Marino and the Rimini area.

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

During periodic visits, the U.S. Consul General in Florence and other consulate general representatives discussed the importance of religious tolerance in meetings with staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The consulate also made inquiries with the government about its September agreement with the Holy See on Catholic instruction in schools.