

TUNISIA 2022 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The new constitution, which was approved in a July referendum and went into force in August, requires the state to support and advance the purposes of Islam, and provides that “Tunisia is part of the Islamic Umma [community or nation],” and that the state must work to achieve the purposes of Islam in preserving life, honor, property, religion, and freedom.” The constitution also states that this will be carried out “within the framework of a democratic system.” The constitution states that it guarantees freedom of belief and conscience, as well as the freedom to worship. It requires the president to be Muslim.

In August, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MRA) placed Muhammad Zein al-Din, an imam from Nabeul, on a 10-day mandatory suspension after he recited verses of the Quran that included language that could be interpreted as referring to “a coup.” According to media reports, authorities apparently saw the imam’s choice of verses as a reference to President Kais Saied’s actions since July 2021 in dissolving parliament and consolidating power, and to the national referendum that approved a new constitution on July 25.

As part of its November report on the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in the country, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) noted that the special rapporteur on freedom of religion had recommended the government ensure that the Baha’i community was able to secure a legal personality. This step, in turn, would enable Baha’i members to manifest their faith in accordance with Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The special rapporteur also recommended that authorities address intolerant societal attitudes that ostracize converts. The government stated that it had taken steps aimed at broadening human rights education and at preventing extremism in children and young people, including by working with judges, social workers, psychologists, and child protection advocates.

As part of the review, several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) called on the government to recognize a person’s right, individually or collectively, to freedom of religion or conviction, including the right to convert; to fight hate speech and discourse against apostasy; to protect religious minorities against any

forms of violence and to prosecute the perpetrators of such acts; to grant the Baha'i community the right to form an association and to have its own cemeteries; and to foster interreligious dialogue.

In January, representatives from many of the country's religious groups signed a *National Charter for Peaceful Coexistence* that called for supporting the rights of religious minorities to practice their faith and promoting peaceful coexistence among religious groups. The Attalaki Association for Religious Freedom and Equality (Attalaki Association) led the initiative, and the MRA supported the event. The Attalaki Association reported that the religious communities that signed the charter were subjected to anonymous insults and threats of violence. Christian converts from Islam said threats from members of their families and other persons reflected societal pressure against Muslims leaving the faith. Some atheists reported facing societal pressure to conceal their atheism, including pressure to participate in Islamic religious traditions. In October, the Elhiwar Ettounsi television channel broadcast a segment on sub-Saharan Christians in the country that stated they were a danger to society, illegal, and practice "sorcery and quackery" rituals.

The U.S. Ambassador and other U.S. embassy officials continued to maintain regular contact with government officials, including in the MRA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad, to discuss issues concerning religious freedom and to encourage peaceful coexistence of religious minorities. Conversations also focused on government efforts to control activities in mosques, difficulties facing Jewish, Baha'i, and Christian citizens, reports of antisemitic acts, and threats to converts from Islam. Throughout the year, embassy officers discussed religious diversity and dialogue with leaders of the Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Baha'i communities.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 11.9 million (midyear 2022), of which approximately 99 percent are Sunni Muslim. Christians, Jews, Shia Muslims, Baha'is, and nonbelievers constitute less than 1 percent of the population. The MRA estimates there are approximately 30,000 Christian residents, most of whom are foreigners, and of whom 80 percent are Roman Catholic. The remaining 20 percent is composed of Protestants, Russian

Orthodox, French Reformists, Anglicans, Evangelicals, Greek Orthodox, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are approximately 5,000 Christian citizens, according to community leaders, most of whom are Anglicans or Evangelicals. According to members of the Jewish community, there are approximately 1,500 Jewish citizens in the country. Around 1,100 of them live on the island of Djerba and in the neighboring town of Zarzis and the remainder in and around Tunis. There is a small Baha'i community, but reliable information on its numbers is not available, although the NGO Minority Rights Group International (MRGI) estimates their numbers to be in the hundreds.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

The new constitution that was approved in a July referendum and went into force in August requires the state to support and advance the purposes of Islam. It states, "Tunisia is part of the Islamic Umma [community or nation]" and provides that the state must work to achieve the purposes of Islam in preserving "life, honor, property, religion, and freedom." The new constitution also states that this will be carried out "within the framework of a democratic system." The 2014 constitution declared the country's religion to be Islam and the country to be a civil state.

The new constitution provides for freedom of belief and conscience and for the freedom to worship. Unlike the 2014 constitution, it requires that worship not compromise public security, mirroring language from the 1959 constitution. Unlike the 2014 constitution, there is also no reference to the nonpartisanship of mosques and houses of worship, nor an emphasis that the government disseminate values of moderation, tolerance, protection of holy sites, and prevention of *takfir* (Muslim accusations of apostasy against other Muslims).

The 2022 constitution requires the president to be Muslim, as did the 2014 constitution.

The penal code criminalizes speech likely "to cause harm to public order or morality" as well as acts undermining public morals in a way that "intentionally violates modesty."

There is no legal prohibition of proselytism, but the law criminalizes forced conversions.

Religious groups may form and register associations under the law to establish a bank account, conduct financial activities such as charity work, and receive favorable tax treatment, including tax-free donations from government-approved associations, provided the association does not purport to represent all believers of a religious group or use the name of a religious group. To establish an association, a religious group must submit a registered letter to the Prime Minister's Office stating the purposes of the association; copies of the national identity cards of its founders, who must be citizens; and two copies of the articles of association signed by the association's founders or their representatives. The articles of association must contain the official name of the association in Arabic and any other language used; its address; a statement of its objectives; membership criteria; membership fees; and a statement of organizational structure, including identification of the decision-making body for the association. The law requires that associations and political parties respect the rule of law and basic democratic principles. The law prohibits associations from engaging in for-profit activities, providing material support to individual political candidates, or adopting bylaws or conducting activities that incite violence or promote hatred, fanaticism, or discrimination on the basis of religion. An association may receive tax-exempt income from organizations, including foreign organizations that have a prior agreement with the government.

Once an association receives a return receipt from the Prime Minister's Office, it has seven days to submit an announcement of the name, purpose, and objectives of the association to the government press. The government press has 15 days to publish the announcement in the official gazette, which constitutes the association's official registration. In the event the government does not return a registered receipt within 30 days, an association may proceed to submit its documents for publication and obtain registration. A foreign association may establish a branch in the country, but the government may also reject its registration request if the government finds the principles or objectives of the foreign association contravene the law.

Violations of the provisions of the law related to associations are punishable, first by a warning of up to 30 days from the secretary general of the government, who

reports directly to the Prime Minister, then by a court order suspending the association's activities for up to 30 days if the violations persist. If the association is still in violation of the law, the secretary general may then appeal to the court for dissolution of the association. Under the law, associations have the right to appeal court decisions.

Registered associations have the right to organize meetings and demonstrations, to publish reports and leaflets, to own real estate, and to engage in "all types of civil activities."

A 1964 *modus vivendi* with the Holy See grants official recognition to the Roman Catholic Church. The agreement allows the Catholic Church to function in the country and provides state recognition of the church. The agreement, however, restricts religious activities and services to the physical confines of authorized churches and prohibits construction of new churches and the ringing of church bells. A limited number of Catholic schools and charities may operate under the *modus vivendi*, but their financial activities are conducted through registration as an association and their affiliation with the church is not publicized.

The law states that the government oversees Islamic prayer services by subsidizing mosques, appointing imams, and paying their salaries. The grand mufti, appointed by the president, is charged with declaring religious holidays, issuing certificates of conversion to Islam, attending to citizens' inquiries, representing the country at international religious conferences, providing opinions on school curricula, and studying and writing about Islam, including offering religious guidance and issuing fatwas. The MRA suggests themes for Friday sermons but does not regulate their content. The government may initiate administrative and legal procedures to remove imams whom authorities determine to be preaching "divisive" theology.

By law, new mosques may be constructed, provided they are built in accordance with national urban planning regulations. The MRA pays for construction of mosques, although private and foreign donors are also able to contribute to construction costs. Mosques become government property upon completion, after which the government must maintain them.

Students in public schools attend mandatory courses on the principles of Islam for one hour per week. Non-Muslim students generally attend these courses but may seek an exemption. The curriculum for secondary school students also includes references to the history of Judaism and Christianity. Religious groups may operate private schools.

Provisions of law addressing marriage, divorce, and other personal status issues are largely based on principles of civil law, combined with elements of sharia. Laws of inheritance are principally based on requirements in sharia, but there are some provisions that allow for exceptions as outlined in the Code of Personal Status.

Newly married couples must state explicitly in the marriage contract whether they elect to combine their possessions or to keep them separate. Sharia inheritance law provides men with a double share of an inheritance compared to women. Some families avoid the application of sharia by executing sales contracts between parents and children to ensure that daughters receive shares of property equal to that given to sons. Non-Muslim women and their Muslim husbands may not inherit from each other, unless they seek a legal judgment based on the rights enshrined in the constitution. The government considers all children of those marriages to be Muslim and forbids those children from inheriting from their mothers. Spouses may, however, freely give up to one-third of their estate to whomever they designate in their will.

The law does not list religion as a prohibited basis for political parties but prohibits political parties from using religion to call for violence or discrimination.

Military service is required for males 20 to 23 years of age for a compulsory one-year term. Men who are 18 to 23 years of age may volunteer for military service. There is no option for alternative service for conscientious objectors.

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

Government Practices

On July 25, the country voted in a national referendum to approve a new constitution. Media outlets cited the turnout rate of 30.5 percent and reported

that over 94 percent of voters approved the new constitution, which went into effect on August 17, replacing the 2014 constitution.

Civil society, political parties, and international observers criticized the drafting process as not inclusive and driven largely by President Saied. Most political parties boycotted the referendum. On July 8, over 30 civil society groups and NGOs addressed a joint statement to President Saied that raised religious freedom and other concerns with the new constitution. The statement said the new constitution “undermines the notion of citizenship that unites Tunisians without discrimination based on faith, color, and gender” by maintaining the requirement that the head of state be Muslim. The new constitution, however, does not require the head of state to be male.

A Brookings Institute analysis said that the new constitution’s language regarding the role of Islam is “something [that] the actual Islamist parties in Tunisia never dared to introduce,” and it quoted a Tunisian scholar as saying that the constitution could set “the foundation of a theocratic Islamic state.” On October 15, rival groups that oppose the government, including the Nahda Party, which describes itself as being composed of Muslim democrats, held mass demonstrations in Tunis protesting against the government and the new constitution.

According to media reports, in August, the MRA placed Muhammad Zein al-Din, an imam from Nabeul, on 10 days of mandatory leave after he recited verses of the Quran (twice during his prayers) that included language that could be interpreted as referring to “a coup.” The Minister of Religious Affairs attended the sunset prayers led by Zein al-Din at the al-Salam Mosque. According to media reports, authorities apparently believed that the imam’s choice of verses was likely a reference to the perception held by some Tunisians that President Saied’s actions consolidating power in the office of the president, including the July 25 referendum, constituted a coup. The General Secretary of the Religious Affairs branch of the Tunisian General Labor Union indicated they were investigating the imam’s removal and said that if his dismissal was confirmed, the Religious Affairs branch would coordinate with the General Labor Union on next steps. MRA provided no comment on the government’s actions.

On June 23, a man with a knife attacked and wounded two police officers guarding the Grand Synagogue of Tunis. According to Agence France-Presse, authorities overpowered and detained the man. A spokesman for the Ministry of Interior said the man had been imprisoned over a “terrorism” case and released in 2021. No update on the case was available at year’s end.

On December 23, the *North Africa Post* reported that the Tunis Court of First Instance (trial court) sentenced four persons, including the imam of Douar Hichar, to sentences ranging from one to 21 years for plotting terrorist attacks against security forces in Tunis. The *Post* also reported that on December 7, the government announced that its security forces had broken up a “terrorist plot” that was targeting a security unit and a religious institution in Sfax Governorate. The statement did not include details about the religious institution or the security unit that was targeted.

The government provided no updates to its promised investigation of the 2021 extradition of Algerian Christian refugee Slimane Bouhafis. The Algerian government, which requested Bouhafis’ extradition, had previously sentenced him to two years in prison following his conviction on charges that included “offending Islam.” According to the Attalaki Association, the government supported multiple removals or exchanges and return to their home countries of foreign Christian nationals from Libya, Algeria, Chad, and Mauritania, who, the Association stated, were subjected to religious persecution in their home nations.

Two broadcasting stations with religious affiliations, Zitouna TV and Quran Kareem, that had been closed by the High Independent Authority for Audiovisual Communications (HAICA) in 2021 resumed on-air programming by broadcasting from Turkey in an effort to circumvent the HAICA restrictions. In 2021, HAICA had ordered the closure of several media outlets with religious affiliations, among them those two, for not complying with HAICA licensing requirements. HAICA regulations do not permit media outlets to be affiliated with political parties or religious groups.

As part of the Ministry of Justice’s rehabilitation program for countering violent extremism, the Committee General for Prisons and Rehabilitation continued to maintain an agreement with the MRA to permit vetted and trained imams to lead religious sessions with prisoners identified as extremists. As part of the ministry’s

measures to counter violent extremism, prisons prohibited organized communal prayers but permitted individual detainees to have religious materials and to pray in their cells.

The Baha'i community's efforts to establish an association remained ongoing at year's end. Following a 2020 court ruling in favor of allowing Baha'is to form an association, the general prosecutor presented an appeal to the court referencing a nonpublic fatwa issued by the Grand Mufti in 2016 that stated that Baha'i Faith members were apostates and infidels and therefore should not be permitted to practice their faith. The appeal has remained pending since 2021. A Baha'i leader reported that Baha'is received threats of violence from members and religious leaders of the Muslim community after the issuance of the fatwa and after unsuccessful efforts by the Baha'i community to convince the Grand Mufti to rescind it. Despite being unable to officially organize, Baha'is were active in civil society.

According to a 2020 MRGI report, because the Baha'i community remained unregistered, it could not have a bank account, organize money collection, or establish religious schools. In 2020, the community petitioned the Minister of Local Affairs to establish a Baha'i cemetery, but it had not received a reply by year's end. A March 11 press release from the Baha'i International Community highlighted a report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on institutional discrimination facing Baha'i in the country. The report cited an unpublished 2016 fatwa, allegedly from leaked government communications, in which the Grand Mufti, the Minister of Religious Affairs, and other senior officials labelled the Baha'is as "infidels." The government appealed a court decision allowing the Baha'is to register an association and to conduct burials in cemeteries according to Baha'i rites.

The government continued to publicly urge imams to disseminate messages of moderation and tolerance to counter what it said were threats of violent extremism. Since 2015, the MRA has conducted regular training sessions for imams on how to disseminate these messages. According to several local mosque committees in charge of mosque operations that are chosen by congregation members, the government generally allowed the committees to manage the daily affairs of their mosques and choose their own imams, with the exception of imams for Friday prayers, who were selected exclusively by the MRA. Regional

MRA representatives within each governorate were required to vet, approve, and appoint both the local mosque committees and the imams. According to an MRA official, the government standardized and enforced mosque opening and closing times, except for certain mosques with cultural or historical significance and very small community mosques. The MRA authorized a department for religious minorities; according to the Attalaki Association, however, the department had not started operations at year's end.

The government discontinued its COVID-19 mask mandate during the year. The *niqab* remained officially prohibited. The government prohibited the wearing of niqabs and other face coverings in administrative and public institutions following 2019 terrorist attacks in order to "maintain public security and guarantee optimal implementation of safety requirements," although women who wore niqabs in these settings were generally not detained. Government officials denied that the restriction limited religious freedom and stressed that its goal was to promote improved security.

In May, following a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions, 3,000 worshippers gathered at the Ghriba synagogue for the annual Lag B'Omer pilgrimage on the island of Djerba. Tunisian Jews expressed appreciation for the government's commitment to religious freedom and support for the pilgrimage, which was attended by high-level government officials and thousands of foreign pilgrims. Attendees included representatives from Jewish communities from Israel, as the Government of Tunisia exceptionally issued tourist visas to Israeli nationals for this pilgrimage. The Ministry of Interior provided security. In remarks, the Prime Minister emphasized the country's commitment to religious freedom, pointing to the commemoration as an important symbol of tolerance and coexistence. The opposition Workers Party criticized the pilgrimage, describing the events as "symbols of normalization with the Zionist entity." Another opposition group, the Tunisian Popular Current, released a statement saying the pilgrimage had become an annual occasion to support normalization with "the enemy entity and an opportunity for its most terrorist members to enter Tunisia."

Christian citizens continued to state there was strong governmental and societal pressure not to discuss a church's activities or theology publicly. Christian sources indicated that many Christians practiced their faith through in-home gatherings

for prayers and services or mass. The Attalaki Association reported that police targeted Christians who displayed faith-related objects – such as crosses and Bibles – harassing and questioning them. In June, two Christian sub-Saharan Africans were detained and questioned by police in the southern part of the country for wearing cross jewelry.

Christians reported the government allowed churches to operate within set guidelines and provided security for their services. The government generally restricted Catholic public religious services or processions outside churches as agreed under the 1964 modus vivendi with the Vatican; however, some celebrations outside of church buildings were permitted. Celebrations resumed in Tunis after interruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the procession of the Madonna of Trapani at the Church of St. Augustine and St. Faithful on August 15, which included Catholic and Muslim participants.

Christian citizens and members of other religious minorities reported the government continued to deny them the right to establish a legal entity or association that would allow the establishment of an Arabic-language church or a cemetery. The Christian community, however, did not submit a formal request for an association or legal status during the year. Christian cemeteries existed for foreign members of the Christian community; Christian citizens, however, continued to need permission from the government to bury family members in any of these cemeteries. Citizens reported they generally did not request such permission due to what they said was a pattern of governmental nonresponse.

Jewish groups said they continued to worship freely, and the government continued to provide security for synagogues and partially subsidized restoration and maintenance costs. Government employees maintained Jewish cemeteries in Tunis and Djerba but did not maintain them in Sousse and El-Kef, where there are also small Jewish communities. According to Jewish community representatives, the synagogue of Tataouine, which was placed on the national heritage registry in 2020, remained under state protection to prevent further degradation of the building. According to Jewish groups, police intermittently harassed Jews and discriminated against them in the south by enforcing stop-and-frisk measures. One Jewish community member reported that the police asked where he lived during a stop in order to determine if he was from a predominately Jewish neighborhood in Djerba.

In accordance with government permits, the Jewish community operated private religious schools, and Jewish children were allowed to split their academic day between public schools and private religious schools or to attend either type of school full-time. The government-run Essouani School and the Houmt Souk Secondary School in Djerba remained the only public schools in which Jewish and Muslim students studied together, primarily because of the small size and geographic concentration of the Jewish community. At these schools, Muslim students attended Islamic education lessons on Saturdays while their Jewish classmates could choose to attend classes on religion at a Jewish school in Djerba. According to Jewish community members, students who attended the private Jewish school were unable to receive a government-recognized certificate of identification stating they were students.

Representatives of the Jewish community reported that as a follow-up to the application they first filed in 2019, they submitted legal documents in 2021 related to establishing a national Jewish community association to the MRA and to the Minister, who had vowed to support the request. At year's end, the MRA had not responded or acted on the application. The Jewish community initiated the application to establish associations in order to better advocate with the government on behalf of Jewish community interests and to serve as an organizing body for the Jewish communities in Gabes, Medenine, and Tunis.

As part of its November report on the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in the country, the UNHRC stated that the special rapporteur on freedom of religion had recommended that authorities ensure that the Baha'i community was able to secure legal personality so its members could practice their faith in accordance with the ICCPR, and that efforts must be made to address intolerant societal attitudes that ostracize converts. The special rapporteur recommended that the government promote policies for the inclusion of all religious and belief groups by fostering interfaith communication, increasing the participation of all in public life, and eliminating indirect and overt forms of discrimination based on religion or belief. The government stated that it had taken steps aimed at broadening human rights education and at preventing extremism in children and young people, including working with judges, social workers, psychologists, and child protection delegates. In addition, it stated, imams and religious leaders are given training with these goals in mind. As part of the UNHRC review, several NGOs called on the government to recognize the right

to freedom of religion or conviction, including the right to convert; to fight hate speech and discourse against apostasy; to protect religious minorities against any forms of violence and to prosecute the perpetrators of such acts; to grant the Baha'i community the right to form an association and to have its own cemeteries; and to foster interreligious dialogue.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

In January, representatives from many of the country's religious groups, including Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Baha'is, signed the *National Charter for Peaceful Coexistence*, an agreement that calls for supporting the rights of religious minorities to practice their faith and promotes peaceful coexistence between religious groups. The Attalaki Association led the initiative, which was supported by the MRA. The association reported that the religious communities that signed the charter were subsequently subjected to anonymous insults and threats of violence. In February, members of the Attalaki Association said that police questioned them, without apparent legal justification, regarding the organization's involvement in the charter and the work of the organization.

Some atheists from Muslim families reported receiving family and societal pressure to return to Islam or to conceal their atheism, including, for instance, by fasting during Ramadan and abstaining from criticizing Islam. Some Christians, especially converts, reported strong family and societal rejection, including threats and violence, and some of them were reportedly beaten and forced to leave their homes on account of their beliefs. In January, according to Attalaki Association, community members threatened a Christian family in Medenine, and their child was reportedly beaten by a teacher in public, because the family was considered "infidels." The family reportedly attempted to file a complaint with the public prosecutor and police, but authorities did not investigate the assault. In February, a police officer reportedly beat an atheist at the urging of his father for being a "heretic." In March, a Christian reported receiving death threats from neighbors for his conversion from Islam and had his business vandalized by community members who wrote "infidel" on the door, which resulted in his eventual bankruptcy due to a lack of customers.

In October, the Elhiwar Ettounsi television channel broadcast a segment on sub-Saharan Christians in the country that stated they are a danger to society, illegal,

and practicing “sorcery and quackery” rituals. According to the Attalaki Association, this media report resulted in attacks on social media against sub-Saharan Christians and generated concern about deportation within their community.

In September, Reuters reported that hotel staff at a beach resort in Sousse told a Muslim woman staying at the resort that she could not wear a “burkini” at the hotel pool. The report stated that the burkini, which only leaves the face, hands, and feet exposed, is worn by some Muslim women and is commonly seen on beaches in the country. The woman involved in the incident said that the hotel’s policy discriminated against her and other Muslim women. Reuters reported that “numerous high-end hotels” in coastal tourist towns had banned the swimwear, which the news agency said reflected enduring European, especially French, influence in the country as well as divisions between secular and religious Tunisians.

Open Doors, an NGO focused on religious freedom for Christians around the world, reported that “new converts are among the most vulnerable Christians in Tunisia,” with women especially at risk. The report stated that female converts from Islam “face the greatest breadth of persecution (especially in the traditional family context), including beatings, home expulsion, house arrest, death threats and rape. Married converts face divorce and loss of child custody, whereas single converts may be forced into marriage.” Muslim men who convert to Christianity may face intimidation, job loss, denial of access to their communities, police detainment, beatings, death threats, and other forms of societal pressure.

According to the MRGI, some civil society organizations reported there was a growing number of Muslim converts to Christianity, but that social taboos remained so strong and widespread that these individuals generally preferred to keep their conversions secret. Many faced ostracism and violence from their own families due to the stigma surrounding conversion from Islam. Some Christians said that people who attended church services faced pressure from family members and others in their neighborhood not to attend. Christians reported family members frequently accused converts of bringing “shame” to the family by their conversion. The Attalaki Association reported that non-Christian family members harassed Christians.

Christian sources reported that local churches continued to coordinate with government officials to help the churches' sub-Saharan congregants pay for rent, food, and basic necessities due to economic hardships.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

The Ambassador, the Chargé d'Affaires, and other embassy officials continued to maintain regular contact with government officials, including in the MRA and the Office of the Presidency, to discuss issues concerning religious freedom and to encourage greater acceptance of religious minorities. Conversations also focused on government efforts to control activities in mosques, difficulties facing Baha'is, Jews, and Christians, and reports of discrimination and/or violence against religious minorities.

Embassy officials maintained frequent contact with leaders of religious groups, including members of the Baha'i, Christian, and Jewish communities, throughout the country to discuss the impact of the security situation on religious groups and the freedom of religious minorities to worship without restrictions by the government or threats from the community. The embassy continued to support programs designed to highlight religious acceptance and to counter violent extremism related to religion, including informal youth-led conversation groups to discuss these issues and alternatives to violence; a program working with scout troops to learn how to recognize and combat signs of religious radicalization; and several research programs aimed at identifying and countering religious radicalization and violent extremism, especially in youth.

The Chargé visited Djerba in May to attend the annual Lag B'Omer pilgrimage and met with the Jewish community to discuss the practice of their faith and challenges facing the Jewish community. The embassy's social media platforms highlighted the event as demonstrating its commitment to advancing freedom of religion, interfaith tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.

The embassy continued to support a two-year grant awarded directly to a local NGO, initiated in 2021 to promote religious diversity through interfaith dialogue, raise awareness of religious freedom, and advocate for reforms to improve freedom of religion in the country.