

DENMARK 2022 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

Executive Summary

The constitution guarantees religious freedom across Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands, which comprise the Kingdom of Denmark. The constitution establishes the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) as the country's established church, granting it some privileges and funding not available to other religious groups. The Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs is responsible for granting official status to religious groups other than the ELC through recognition by royal decree (for groups recognized prior to 1970) or through official registration. Congregations are not required to register by law, although registration is required to receive tax benefits. Religious communities must comply with annual reporting requirements to maintain government recognition.

In January, the government introduced the country's first action plan to combat antisemitism as part of the budget agreement for a broad national action plan against racism. In August, the newly created Commission for the Forgotten Women's Struggle recommended that the government ban hijabs for students in elementary schools. The commission's recommendation subsequently saw a large public protest in Copenhagen on August 26. Jewish and Muslim communities and the national teachers' association opposed the proposal. The government did not act on the proposal by year's end. In April, a provision of earlier legislation that criminalized clerics if they condoned certain actions as part of religious education, including supporting violence in sermons, became permanent. The Danish Institute of Human Rights (DIHR) and major church organizations said the provision restricted freedom of expression and subjected religious leaders to a wider interpretation of criminal behavior than other citizens. In February, the Supreme Court ruled it was legal to give an unconscious patient who was a member of Jehovah's Witnesses a blood transfusion in a situation where the patient's life was in danger. A spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses stated the organization considered the decision to be a "clear violation of the fundamental rights" guaranteed in the European Convention on Human Rights. Speaking to a conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in September, a Muslim rights activist said the government's stated policy of better integrating ethnic and religious minority communities discriminated against Muslims. The *European Islamophobia Report* released in November

stated concerns about “structural barriers for Muslims,” including the use of a government statistical category which could be used to discriminate against Muslims in housing and other social benefits. The Finance Act of 2022, which became law in December 2021, included a four-year grant to strengthen governmental efforts to combat hate crimes, including by creating an action plan against racism that would also address religiously motivated hate crimes. The Ministry of the Interior and Housing continued to implement the government’s action plan, under the General Housing Act, to eliminate what it termed “parallel societies” by 2030 to better integrate citizens and residents. In a report published in April, the ministry stated that from when the law went into force to the end of 2021, the government had converted 1,143 public housing buildings to private housing, sold 648 public housing buildings and demolished 4,037 public housing units.

Some representatives from the Muslim community said there was an increase in religiously motivated crimes across the country but said these were not always reported due to a distrust of law enforcement and in some cases linguistic challenges faced by imams. On May 31, international media and a nongovernmental organization (NGO) reported that vandals damaged or knocked down approximately 30 tombstones, including 14 Jewish ones, in a cemetery in the north of the country. In April, the Western High Court upheld the one-year prison sentence of an individual police charged with vandalizing the Jewish cemetery in Aalborg in 2021.

U.S. embassy officials met with parliamentarians and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office of the Special Representative for Freedom of Religion or Belief to emphasize the importance the United States places on religious freedom and to discuss ways to combat anti-Muslim sentiment and antisemitism. Embassy officials expressed concerns about recommendations to the government proposing to ban hijabs in elementary schools; embassy officials also urged support for the protection of religious expression. Embassy officials engaged with religious leaders from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities throughout the year to discuss issues including problems for Muslims with opening bank accounts, perceptions of and concerns regarding legislation affecting religious freedom, and the importance of interfaith engagement.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 5.9 million (midyear 2022). As of mid-2022, 72.5 percent of the mainland Danish population were ELC members according to Statistics Denmark. The Danish government does not collect data on religious affiliation outside of the ELC. Academics estimated in November 2021 that there are approximately 300,000 Muslims, accounting for 5.1 percent of the population. Muslims are concentrated in the largest cities, particularly Copenhagen, Odense, and Aarhus. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates other religious groups, each constituting less than 1 percent of the population, to include, in descending order of size, Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Serbian Orthodox Christians, Jews, Baptists, Buddhists, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Pentecostals, members of the Baha'i Faith, and nondenominational Christians. The organization The Jewish Community estimates there are between 6,000 and 8,000 Jews, mostly in the Copenhagen area.

The Kingdom includes the semiautonomous regions of the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The U.S. government estimates the total population of the Faroe Islands at approximately 52,000 (midyear 2022). The Faroese government estimates that approximately 85 percent of the population are members of the Church of the Faroe Islands, and approximately 13 percent are members of the Plymouth Brethren. Other religious communities which together comprise less than 2 percent of the population include Roman Catholics, members of the Pentecostal Movement, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of the Baha'i Faith.

According to official Greenland statistics, the population of Greenland is 57,000 (midyear 2022). Per Greenlandic government statistics, 93 percent of the population belong to the Church of Greenland, part of the ELC. In addition to the Greenlandic Church, there are small communities of Catholics, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of the Baha'i Faith.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal Framework

The constitution guarantees religious freedom across Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. The constitution declares the ELC as the kingdom's established

church, which shall receive state support and to which the reigning monarch must belong. The constitution also states individuals shall be free to form congregations to worship according to their beliefs, provided that nothing “contrary to good morals or public order shall be taught or done.” The constitution stipulates no person may be deprived of access to the full enjoyment of civil and political rights because of religious beliefs and that these beliefs shall not be used to evade compliance with any common civic duty. It prohibits requiring individuals to make personal financial contributions to religious denominations to which they do not adhere. In accordance with the Greenland Self-Government Act and the Faroe Islands Home Rule Act, additional Danish legislation affecting religious freedom may not necessarily apply to the entire kingdom.

The law prohibits hate speech, including religious hate speech, and specifies as penalties a fine (amount unspecified) or a maximum of two years’ imprisonment. The law also prohibits the incitement of terrorism, murder, rape, or violence in connection with religious movements or training and specifies penalties, including a fine or a maximum of three years’ imprisonment. Greenland has a similar hate speech law, although it does not specify a minimum or maximum penalty.

The ELC is the only religious group that receives funding through state grants and voluntary, tax-deductible contributions paid through payroll deduction by its members. Voluntary payroll deduction contributions account for an estimated 79 percent of the ELC’s operating budget, and government grants contribute another 10 percent; the remaining 11 percent comes from a variety of activities, such as revenue from use of church property. Members of other recognized religious communities may not contribute to their faith groups via payroll deduction but may donate voluntarily and receive a tax deduction. The ELC and other state-recognized religious communities have the authority to carry out registration of civil unions and name changes. The ELC also registers births and deaths of its members. The Church of the Faroe Islands separated from the Danish ELC in July 2007. The Church of Greenland separated from the ELC in 2009 and the Greenlandic government funds it. Greenland does not have a payroll deduction system for contributions to the ELC.

The Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs is responsible for granting official status to religious groups other than the ELC through recognition by royal decree (for

groups recognized prior to 1970 (such as the Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Russian Orthodox, and Jewish communities) or through official registration.

Congregations are not required to register by law, although registration is required to receive tax benefits. Religious communities must comply with annual reporting requirements to maintain their government recognition. According to the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, there are 425 religious groups and congregations the government officially recognizes or that are affiliated with recognized groups: 310 Christian, 72 Muslim, 18 Buddhist, five Hindu, three Jewish, and 17 other groups and congregations, including Baha'is and followers of the indigenous Norse belief system *Forn Sidr*.

Recognized religious groups may perform legal marriage ceremonies, name and baptize children with legal effect, issue legal death certificates, obtain residence permits for foreign clergy, establish cemeteries, and receive various value added tax exemptions. The law allows only religious communities recognized before 1970 to issue birth, baptismal, and marriage certificates, but in accordance with a 2017 law recognizing religious groups outside the ELC, all recognized religious groups will be able to do so starting in 2023. Members of other religious communities or individuals unaffiliated with a recognized religious group may have birth and death certificates issued by the health authority.

The state permits groups not recognized by either royal decree or the registration process, such as the Church of Scientology, to engage in religious practices without public registration. The state does not grant unrecognized religious groups full tax-exempt status, but members may deduct contributions to these groups from their taxes.

The law codifies the registration process for religious communities other than the ELC and treats equally those recognized by royal decree and those approved through registration. A religious community must have at least 50 adult members who have resident status and possess Danish citizenship. For congregations located in sparsely populated regions such as Greenland, the government applies a lower population threshold, which varies according to the total population of the region.

Religious groups seeking registration must submit a document describing the group's central traditions and most important rituals to the Ministry of

Ecclesiastical Affairs. A group applying for registration must also provide a copy of its rules, regulations, and organizational structure; an audited financial statement (which it must submit annually); information about the group's leadership; and a statement on the number of adult members permanently residing in the country. Groups also must have formal procedures for membership and make their teachings available to all members. The ministry makes the final decision on registration applications after receiving recommendations from a group consisting of a lawyer, religious historian, sociologist of religion, and nonordained theologian. Religious groups that do not submit the annual financial statement or other required information may lose their registration status.

The law bans individuals and organizations from receiving financial donations from those in the country or overseas who "oppose or undermine democracy and fundamental freedoms and human rights." The government maintains a list of individuals and organizations so designated, which may include foreign religious groups. The law sets a fine at a value corresponding to 30 percent of the estimated value of the donation for any donations that individually or together exceed 10,000 kroner (\$1,400) from an individual or organization on that list. This law does not apply to the Faroe Islands or Greenland.

The law prohibits masks and face coverings, including burqas and niqabs, in public spaces. Violators face fines ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 Danish kroner (\$140-\$1,400). Fines are 1,000 kroner (\$140) for the first offense, 2,000 kroner (\$300) for the second, 5,000 kroner (\$720) for the third, and 10,000 kroner (\$1,400) for the fourth and subsequent offenses. This law does not cover Greenland or the Faroe Islands.

The law bans judges from wearing religious symbols such as headscarves, turbans, skullcaps, and large crucifixes while in court proceedings.

All public and private schools, including religious schools, receive government financial support. The Ministry of Children and Education oversees private schools, which includes supervising teaching standards, regulating compliance with the country's regulations on curriculum, and financial screening. The Board of Education and Quality conducts systematic monitoring and has authority to issue directives to individual institutions, withhold grants, and terminate financial support. Public schools must teach about religion using an ELC-focused

curriculum. The instructors are public school teachers rather than individuals provided by the ELC. Religion classes are compulsory in grades 1-9, although students may be exempt if a parent presents a request in writing. No alternative classes are available.

The ELC religion curriculum in grades one through six focuses on life philosophies and ethics, biblical stories, and the history of Christianity. In grades seven through nine, the curriculum adds a module on world religions. The course is optional in grade 10. If a student is 15 or older, the student and parent must jointly request the student's exemption. If a student is under 15, a parental request for exemption is sufficient. Private schools must teach religion classes in grades one through nine, including world religions in grades seven through nine. The religion classes taught in grades one through nine need not include ELC theology. The law allows collective prayer in schools, but each school must regulate prayer in a neutral, nondiscriminatory manner, and students must be able to opt out of participating.

The law seeks to reduce the number of what it terms "parallel societies" by 2030 and defines these as neighborhoods with more than 1,000 residents where at least two criteria based on employment, income, education, and crime rates are met and where the proportion of non-Western immigrants and their descendants exceeds 50 percent. The law requires neighborhoods classified as parallel societies for four years in a row to reduce the amount of public housing in their area by 40 percent through demolition, sale, or privatization. The government would be responsible for rehousing evicted individuals. The law requires parents in communities with significant non-Western populations to send children from the age of one to government-funded daycare, where they learn "Danish values," including Christmas and Easter traditions. The penalty for noncompliance is the loss of quarterly welfare benefits of up to 4,557 kroner (\$660).

The law also seeks to reduce the percentage of non-Western residents to 10 percent in neighborhoods it terms "prevention areas" before they become "parallel societies." These areas are defined as meeting two socioeconomic criteria and where the proportion of non-Western immigrants and their descendants exceeds 30 percent.

Military service, typically for four months, is mandatory for all physically fit men older than 18 years of age except for residents of Greenland and the Faroe Islands. There is an exemption for conscientious objectors, including on religious grounds, which allows for alternative civilian service. An individual wishing to perform alternative service as a conscientious objector must apply within eight weeks of receiving notice of military service. The application is adjudicated by the Conscientious Objector Administration and must demonstrate that military service of any kind is incompatible with the individual's conscience. Alternative service may take place in various social and cultural institutions, peace movements, organizations related to the United Nations, churches and interreligious organizations, and environmental organizations.

The law prohibits ritual slaughter of animals, including kosher and halal slaughter, without prior stunning and limits ritual slaughter with prior stunning to cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens. All slaughter must take place at a slaughterhouse. Slaughterhouses practicing ritual slaughter are obliged to register with the Veterinary and Food Administration. Violations of the law are punishable by a fine or up to four months in prison. Halal and kosher meat are legal to import.

The law requires clergy members with legal authorization to officiate marriages to have an adequate mastery of the Danish language and to complete a two-day course on family law and civil rights administered by the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. The law also requires that religious workers "must not behave or act in a way that makes them unworthy to exercise public authority." The government may strip the right to perform marriages from religious workers whom it perceives as not complying with these provisions.

By law, the Ministry of Immigration and Integration may prevent entry by foreign religious figures who do not already have a residence permit if it determines their presence poses a threat to public order. In such cases, the ministry places the individuals on a national sanctions list and bars them from entry for two years, a period which it may extend. The sanctions list does not apply to European Union nationals and residents. This law does not apply to Greenland or the Faroe Islands but royal decree may enforce it in those territories.

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

Government Practices

The government unveiled the country's first action plan to combat antisemitism on January 25. The plan consists of 15 initiatives that focus on engaging various aspects of civil society to combat and prevent antisemitism. The initiatives include mandatory teaching about the Holocaust and other instances of genocide in middle and high schools, the promotion of Danish-Jewish cultural history, increased law enforcement training to prevent antisemitism, the protection of Jews and Jewish buildings, and strengthened online monitoring of antisemitic incidents. Further initiatives included the appointment of a national coordinator to combat antisemitism and strengthening Danish involvement in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. The Jewish Community in Denmark welcomed the plan as "a great start."

In January, the government established the Commission for the Forgotten Women's Struggle to combat "honor-related social control" of women from minority backgrounds. The commission, made up of politicians, academics, and activists, makes policy recommendations primarily to the Ministry of Immigration and Integration, but also to other relevant ministries. In its terms of reference and on its website, the commission stated that its goal was to ensure that all children growing up in the country "have the same rights." The commission also stated that family and community pressure to behave and dress in certain ways prevented young girls from minority ethnic backgrounds "from living the lives they wanted." The commission said, "all girls and women have the right to live a life of freedom, self-determination and without oppression from families or authorities who want to force them to live by outdated religious and cultural norms."

In August, the commission presented nine preliminary recommendations to the government, covering areas such as provision of social services and education. Among these, the commission recommended that the government ban hijabs for students in elementary schools because the use of headscarves could "divide children" into two groups, "us and them." The commission's chairperson also said elementary-aged children were too young to determine for themselves whether they wanted to wear a headscarf.

The hijab ban proposal saw negative reactions and a large public protest in Copenhagen on August 26. When announced, left-wing political parties and the centrist Social Liberal Party opposed the recommendation, while right-wing parties supported it. At the time, Minister of Immigration and Integration Kaare Dybvad did not say whether the government would accept the recommendation. In September, following the public outcry, two of the 10 commission members retracted their support for the hijab ban. The Jewish Community in Denmark and the Islamic Society in Denmark condemned the proposed ban in press releases. The Center for Muslim Rights in Denmark, the national School Leaders' Association, and the Danish Teachers' Association also strongly criticized the recommendation. The new government, formed in December, neither commented on the commission's recommendations nor acted on them before the end of year.

In consultation with organization Jewish Community in Denmark, the government continued to provide security for sites considered to be at high risk of a terrorist attack, including Copenhagen's synagogue, community center, and one school.

The Supreme Court ruled in February it was legal to give an unconscious patient who was a member of Jehovah's Witnesses a blood transfusion in a situation where the patient's life was in danger. The decision stemmed from a 2014 case in which a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses died after receiving a blood transfusion while unconscious, even though the hospital was aware that the patient was a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses and he carried a card saying he did not wish to receive blood under any circumstances. The patient's widow brought the case to the Agency for Patient Complaints in 2015. Overturning a 2020 decision by the Eastern High Court, the Supreme Court ruled that the hospital was not in breach of either the Health Act or the European Convention on Human Rights. The Supreme Court found the patient's refusal to receive blood had not been provided on an informed basis in connection with a specific disease or medical situation. The widow and her husband's estate said the ruling was too rigid if it required that a patient must express his or her transfusion wishes for every individual disease or medical situation. A spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses stated the organization considered the decision to be a "clear violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed in Articles 8 and 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights," and said that a person who can give verbal or

written consent should have the right to make his or her own decisions regarding medical treatment.

In an interview in September, then Minister of Education Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil reiterated her political party's (Social Democrats) interest in restricting Muslim private "free schools" by adapting a proposal first raised by the party in 2017, which would remove government subsidies and grants from those schools in which the proportion of students with foreign backgrounds exceeded 50 percent. In effect, this could lead many of those schools to close. In response, the Muslim Community Council said the government proposal reflected ethnic profiling and restricted individual freedoms. The head of the Danish Free School Association said the proposal would be impossible to implement and called it "unnecessary symbolic politics." The Ministry of Justice stated in 2020 that the proposal would violate the European Convention on Human Rights. The *Kristeligt Dagblad* (the Christian Daily) newspaper said the proposal would "set the stage for a completely unreasonable legislative practice against a certain minority based on ethnicity and descent."

The penal code provision popularly known as the "imam clause," which criminalizes the explicit incitement of terrorism, murder, rape, psychological violence, or religious marriages of minors in connection with religious training, became permanent law in April. Lawmakers introduced the provision as a temporary measure in 2016, with the requirement that it be made permanent during the 2021-2022 parliamentary year. According to the government, making the law permanent was important to protect against those who, in connection with religious education, "abuse their special position and undermine the community." The provision includes an unspecified fine or imprisonment of up to three years for violations. Greenland does not have a similar provision. Between January 2017 and January 2022, police received three reports of abuses under the "imam clause." As of January, one of those cases was under investigation but police provided no details. In a second case, jurors found an imam guilty of having expressly approved murder in a sermon in 2017 and sentenced him to six months' probation. In the third case, police determined further investigation was not warranted.

The National Council of Churches in Denmark and the Council on Interchurch Relations of the ELC expressed opposition to the "imam clause" provision. The

National Council said the provision should be repealed “in order to uphold the principles of equality before the law and to ensure the realization of freedom of belief and religion for all.” The DIHR criticized the provision, stating it restricted freedom of expression, applied to statements made in a private context, had an unclear scope, and subjected religious leaders to a wider interpretation of criminal behavior than other citizens. In June, the DIHR called on the Ministry of Justice to assess whether the provision was proportionate and necessary.

Several representatives from the Muslim community complained about the problems of opening bank accounts for their mosques due to strict regulations on money laundering and negative media stories about foreign donations. One Muslim leader said his mosque had been unable to open a local bank account for more than three years, which he attributed to the banks’ collective anti-money laundering efforts in general, and the local bank’s fear of facilitating “terrorist financing.” In the past, some political leaders criticized local foundations for receiving foreign contributions for Muslim organizations. Some observers said this led banks to consider that Muslim organizations were higher risk.

The Finance Act of 2022, which became law in December 2021, included a four-year grant to strengthen governmental efforts to combat all hate crimes, including by creating an action plan against racism that would also address religiously motivated hate crimes. In response to the action plan, the DIHR recommended the Ministry of Justice appoint a national coordinator whom religious congregations could alert if faced with religious hate crimes or threats.

In January, the attorney general dropped the hate speech charge against the individual who shouted derogatory remarks at Muslim parliamentarian Sikandar Siddique and his parents outside of parliament in 2021; the attorney general said the individual should be prosecuted for harassment of a public servant instead. In August, a court acquitted the individual of harassing a member of parliament, but found the person guilty on other charges, including possession of a weapon police found in his car.

The Ministry of the Interior and Housing continued to implement the government’s action plan, under the General Housing Act, to eliminate what it termed “parallel societies” by 2030 to better integrate citizens and residents. In a report published in April, the ministry stated that from when the law went into

force to the end of 2021, the government had converted 1,143 public housing buildings to private housing, sold 648 public housing buildings and demolished 4,037 public housing units. The report also said there were 10,420 new housing and businesses in areas of concern since 2021, which had attracted new residents. The report stated that in the period from when the law went into force until October 2021, the government required 93 children in “parallel society” communities to enter specific daycare centers and paused quarterly welfare benefits for noncompliance with the daycare requirement 22 times. In the same period, 132 families applied for and received permission to enroll their children in government-approved schools. In its end-year update on December 1, the ministry announced that the number of neighborhoods designated as “parallel societies” decreased for the third year in a row to 10, compared with 12 in 2021. For the related category of “preventative areas” on which the government focused before such neighborhoods became “parallel societies,” the ministry said it increased the number to 67, compared with 61 in 2021.

Observers continued to widely interpret “non-Western” communities, as mentioned in the “parallel societies” legislation, to mean Muslim-majority communities. The DIHR continued to call the government’s plan discriminatory and recommended the government not include residents’ ethnic backgrounds in parallel society criteria.

Addressing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Human Dimension Conference in Warsaw in September, Lamies Nassri, a project manager at the Center for Muslim Rights in Denmark, said the government’s parallel society policy did not promote integration but discriminated against Muslims and ethnic minorities, “depriving them of their rights and portraying them as ‘enemies within the state,’ who live in parallel societies that must be fought.” She said, “We also see this targeting in the way Muslims families are portrayed as oppressive and controlling toward their children and, as such, need to be surveilled” with their children put into state nurseries from the age of one “to get instruction in Danish values and language.”

In June, hundreds of residents of the Mjølnerparken neighborhood of Copenhagen gathered to protest the demolition of a residential building there. Mjølnerparken is defined as a “parallel society” by the government because 80 percent of its population are immigrants (and their descendants) from non-

Western countries. On November 7, the Eastern High Court announced it would send to the European Court of Justice a 2018 case brought by the Mjølnerparken residents against the Ministry of Housing and the Interior. The residents challenged the ministry's order that residents of 260 houses in the neighborhood sell their homes and move elsewhere. Media reported that in its decision, the Eastern High Court would ask the Court of Justice to determine whether the use of the term "non-Western" to identify populations defined as parallel societies is considered "ethnic origin"; if so, the criteria could violate EU antidiscrimination laws. The DIHR called the decision a positive development with significance beyond the country's borders. According to local media reports and a press release by the NGO Open Society Justice Initiative, the Court of Justice would assess whether the government breached residents' antidiscrimination rights based on their ethnicity and their right to a home.

In November, the Leopold Weiss Institute issued its latest *European Islamophobia Report*. The report expressed concerns about "structural barriers for Muslims" in the country, based on a government statistical category that officials adopted in 2020 and that separated individuals from the Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan, Turkey (MENAPT) from other demographic, immigration, and citizenship application categories. The report stated the government could use the MENAPT category, which assumes that most persons from those areas are Muslim, to discriminate against Muslims in housing and other social benefits. Under the elimination of the parallel societies policy, for example, municipalities could refuse housing to applicants from MENAPT countries, or demolish lower-income residential blocks used by MENAPT immigrants, the report stated.

The government added one individual in March and three organizations in June to its list of foreign entities barred from sending financial donations to recipients in the country because the government deemed them to "oppose or undermine democracy and fundamental freedoms and human rights" in accordance with the law. These were the first four additions to the list since the relevant law came into force in 2021. Two of the organizations were Kuwait-based Muslim organizations, and the one individual was also among those religious figures banned from entering the country by the Immigration Service as a potential threat to public order. In June, the DIHR called on the government to clarify the scope of the law and to explain how names were added to the list.

In December, the Immigration Service updated its national sanctions list of religious preachers barred from entering the country to include 21 individuals, compared with 22 in 2021. Of the eight individuals added in 2022 (which also included the individual added to the financial donation ban), two were U.S. citizens; one of these was a dual national. The others included residents of Turkey, Australia, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories. The Ministry of Immigration and Integration stated the individuals could not enter the country for “the sake of the nation’s public order” but provided no additional details.

On November 16, Queen Margrethe visited the Danish Jewish Museum and attended a celebratory service at Copenhagen Synagogue to mark 400 years of Jewish history in Denmark. At the synagogue, she met the chairman of the Jewish Community, Dr. Henri Goldstein, and Rabbi Yair Melchior.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

Police reported 164 religiously motivated crimes in 2021, the most recent year for which statistics were available, a decrease from the 194 reported in 2020. There were 63 crimes reported against Muslims, compared with 87 in 2020; 93 against Jews, compared with 79 in 2020; five against Christians, compared with 25 cases in 2020; and three against members of other religions or belief groups, the same number as in 2020. Most incidents involved harassment, hate speech, and vandalism of Jewish tombstones. The report cited hate speech as the most common type of religiously motivated hate crime. In 2021, 38 percent of religiously motivated hate crime cases reported were directed at Muslims, compared to 45 percent in 2020. In 2021, 57 percent of the religiously motivated hate crime cases were directed at Jews, compared with 41 percent in 2020. The report noted that almost half of the cases targeting Jews in 2021 stemmed from the actions of a single person, who sent several emails containing antisemitic language; this explained the higher number of hate crime incidents that year. The report attributed the decrease in cases targeting Christians to the lack of any single incident generating multiple cases as in 2020, when several parish priests received a series of threatening messages. According to the police report, 41 percent of religiously motivated hate crimes took place online in 2021 and were again the largest category of online hate crimes. Of the 98 reported online hate crimes that year, 68 involved religion, of which 13 involved Muslims and 53 Jews.

In comparison, there were 164 hate crimes reported online in 2020, 99 of which involved religion; 32 involved Muslims and 51 involved Jews.

Some representatives from the Muslim community said there was an increase in religiously motivated crimes across the country, but these crimes were not always reported. One leader said, for example, that incidents of vandalism against mosques were often not reported to the police due to lack of faith in law enforcement and in some cases linguistic challenges faced by imams. Some Muslims also said that “hostile societal attitudes” encouraged forced assimilation rather than integration. In its 2021 report, the police also acknowledged that the Jewish Community assumed the number of antisemitic hate crimes was artificially low because many Danes avoided revealing they were Jewish out of fear of antisemitism.

On May 31, international media and an NGO reported that vandals damaged or knocked down 30 tombstones, including 14 Jewish monuments, in a cemetery in the north of the country. International media reported that local police investigated the incident. Police said the attack did not target a specific religious group, since tombstones also exhibited damage or displacement in the Christian part of the cemetery.

In April, a court upheld the 2021 guilty verdict of a man charged with vandalism and racism for placing dolls in nooses near a grave in the Jewish cemetery in Aalborg and leaving antisemitic flyers referring to a website for the right-wing radical organization Nordic Resistance Movement. He was serving a one-year prison sentence at year’s end.

In July, the Jewish Community in Denmark launched a website to counter what it stated was misinformation about circumcision for boys, which was the subject of broad public and political discussion in 2021, when parliament failed to pass legislation proposing to ban and criminalize ritual circumcision for boys under the age of 18. The Jewish Community also published the results of its 2021 national survey on the issue, conducted by Gallup, which found that 38 percent of the population supported a ban against male child circumcision; an opinion poll conducted by a Danish research firm in 2021 showed that approximately 74 percent of the public supported a male circumcision ban. According to the Jewish Community, the results of its survey, which asked specifically about Jewish ritual

circumcision, made clear that fewer people supported the ban than indicated in the previous poll. The Jewish Community chairman attributed this to the 400-year presence of Jewish people in the country, which he said gave people a greater understanding of Jewish rituals. The chairman emphasized the Jewish Community also supported the rights of Muslims to practice their rituals. The Jewish Community shared the results of its poll with parliament, and the *Kristeligt Dagblad* newspaper also highlighted the results.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

Embassy officials met with parliamentarians and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office of the Special Representative for Freedom of Religion or Belief to emphasize the importance the United States places on religious freedom, and to discuss ways to combat anti-Muslim sentiment and antisemitism in the country. Embassy officials expressed concern about the ban on hijabs in elementary schools proposed by the Commission for the Forgotten Women's Struggle. They also emphasized that the Muslim community opposed the 2021 proposal by a minority political party to include the study of Prophet Muhammad caricatures in freedom of speech portions of textbooks. Embassy officials also urged support for the protection of religious expression.

Embassy officials engaged with religious leaders from the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities throughout the year to discuss interfaith engagement opportunities and challenges facing the religious communities in the country. In commemoration of National Religious Freedom Day in January, the Charge d'Affaires participated in a series of meetings with local faith leaders, which included a walking tour of a church, a mosque, and a synagogue. This interfaith engagement emphasized the importance of religious freedom as a human right and fostered discussion of political and social issues affecting faith communities in the country, including challenges for Muslims in opening bank accounts. The embassy amplified the events on social media and used its social media accounts throughout the year to commemorate multifaith religious holidays and promote religious freedom.

On April 20, the Charge d'Affaires hosted an iftar with a diverse range of Muslim community leaders and parliamentarians to discuss issues pertaining to religious freedom. The conversations revolved around the possible reemergence of the

circumcision ban, the potential introduction of Prophet Muhammad caricatures in school curricula, and a parliament proposed antiracism bill. The embassy amplified this event on social media as an opportunity for interfaith dialogue and for supporting religious freedom and tolerance.

The embassy also funded the Jewish Community survey on attitudes toward ritual circumcision for boys as part of its program to combat antisemitism.