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**U.S. Department of State
Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999:
Uganda**

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UGANDA

Section I. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There are no registration requirements for indigenous religious organizations; however, foreign missionary groups, like foreign nongovernmental organizations, must register with the Government. There were no reports that the Government refused to grant registration to any foreign missionary groups. Permits are necessary for the construction of facilities, including religious facilities. There were no reports that the Government refused to grant such permits to any religious organization.

Christianity is the majority religion, and its adherents constitute approximately 66 percent of the population. Muslims account for approximately 16 percent of the population. A variety of other religions, including traditional indigenous religions, Hinduism, Baha'ism, and Judaism, are practiced freely and, combined, make up about 18 percent of the population. Among the Christian groups, the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches claim approximately the same number of followers, accounting for perhaps 95 percent of the nation's professed Christians. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Baptist Church, the Unification Church, and the Pentecostal Church all are active, among others. Muslims are mainly Sunni, although there are also Shi'a followers of the Aga Khan among the Asian community. Several branches of Hinduism are represented. Atheism is negligible.

In many areas, particularly in rural settings, some religions tend to be syncretistic. Deeply held traditional indigenous beliefs commonly are blended into established religious rites or observed side-by-side with such rites, particularly in areas that are predominantly Christian.

Muslims and adherents of other minority religions occupy positions of authority in local and central government.

Missionary groups of several denominations are present and active in the country, and face no particular restrictions on their activity.

Muslim groups complained of extensive mistreatment by security officials in Kampala and the west. In particular, complaints regarding arrests targeted at young Muslims on suspicion that they suppor-

ted rebel groups increased during the period covered by this report. Between April and September 1998, approximately 100 Muslim men were arrested by unidentified officials at their places of residence, business, and in public areas. The men detained were denied due process, and held in unofficial, unregistered places of remand. Some were tortured. On June 4, 1998, the Uganda Human Rights Council publicly called for the release of the men, claiming that such detention was both illegal and a violation of their constitutional rights. The Ministry of Internal Affairs 1 week later released a partial list of those on remand, transferred them to registered, or gazetted, places of detention, and formally charged them with treason. The Ministry's list indicated that those under detention were suspected of collaboration with rebel or terrorist groups known to be operating in the country. The wives of some of the remaining unconfirmed detainees demonstrated publicly in Kampala, which led to the release of some of those missing; however, a substantial number (perhaps 30 to 40) still remain unaccounted for. According to unconfirmed reports, officials from the Directory of Military Intelligence (DMI) held those who were missing, and used physical torture on them to gain confessions and implicate other Muslim suspects. There were unconfirmed reports that some of the Muslim detainees suspected of being collaborators with the rebel Allied Democratic Forces, or involved in terrorist activities, died as a result of torture by DMI officials. There was no clear indication that the religion of the victims was the sole factor in this detention or torture.

Private Koranic and Christian schools are common. There is no religious instruction in public schools.

Prisoners are given the opportunity to pray on the day appropriate to their faith. Muslim prisoners usually are released from work duties during the month of Ramadan.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of detainees or prisoners in which it was clear that their religious practices were the sole reason for their detention.

There were no reports of the forced religious conversion of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section II. Societal Attitudes

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities, and no religious group actively impinges upon the right of others to worship.

Section III. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the overall context of the promotion of human rights.

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