

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	117
Land:	Sierra Leone
Kilde:	U.S. Department of State
Titel:	"International religious freedom report 2006"
Udgivet:	29. november 2006
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2007



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Sierra Leone

International Religious Freedom Report 2006

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

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

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom; however, there were two known incidents of religious intolerance during the period covered by this report.

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 29,925 square miles, and its population is approximately 4.9 million. The Inter-Religious Council (IRC) estimated that the population was 60 to 70 percent Muslim, 20 to 30 percent Christian, and 5 to 10 percent indigenous and other faiths. There were small numbers of Baha'is, Hindus, and Jews. There was no information concerning the number of atheists in the country.

Many syncretistic practices reportedly existed, and many citizens practiced a mixture of Islam and traditional indigenous religions or Christianity and traditional indigenous religions.

Historically, most Muslims have been concentrated in the northern areas of the country, and Christians have been located in the south; however, the eleven-year civil war, which officially was declared over in 2002, resulted in movement by major segments of the population.

There were a number of foreign missionary groups operating in the country, including Roman Catholic, Ahmadiyya, Wesleyan, Mormon, Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox Christian, and others.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. The Government at all levels sought to protect this right in full and did not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Holy days celebrated as national holidays include the Muslim Eid al-Adha, the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad, Eid al-Fitr holidays, and the Christian Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Christmas holidays.

The Government has no requirements for recognizing, registering, or regulating religious groups.

The Government permits religious instruction in public schools. Students are allowed to choose whether to attend Muslim- or Christian-oriented classes.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

In January 2005 the Immigration Department revised its annual registration fees for businessmen, teachers, missionaries, and other groups of foreign residents. Fees for missionaries increased from approximately \$3 (10,000 leones) to approximately \$70 (200,000 leones). Some foreign missionaries complained that the increased immigration registration fee was a restriction.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees in the country.

Forced Religious Conversion

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

Anti-Semitism

In February 2006 a self-proclaimed rabbi reported that a Muslim man threatened him while he was proselytizing near a

mosque in Freetown. The rabbi said that he departed the area and did not report the incident to the police.

Persons commonly use homes and schools as places of worship. Landlords often permit such activity even if they do not share the same religious beliefs as their tenants. In December 2005 a rabbi reported that he was evicted from his residence in Makeni because he was hosting religious services in his home for approximately 150 persons.

Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom, and interfaith marriage is common. The IRC, composed of Christian and Muslim leaders, plays a vital role in civil society and actively participates in efforts to further the peace process in the country and the subregion. Christian and Muslim leaders worked together with the National Accountability Group and the Anti-Corruption Commission to address the problem of corruption in society. The IRC reported that membership applications from Baha'i and Jewish representatives were pending.

In April 2005 on a Muslim public holiday, a group of Muslims in Rokupr burned the *igbala* (hut or shrine) where the local hunting society stored its traditional hunting masks so that the group could not stage its traditional parade. A local newspaper reported and police confirmed that the Muslims burned the masks because they believed that the pagan tradition was a desecration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. Police arrested several persons, but the local chief brought the two groups together and resolved the case out of court.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discussed religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The U.S. embassy continued to maintain frequent contact with the IRC and its individual members.

Released on September 15, 2006

[International Religious Freedom Report Home Page](#)