

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	623
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: China – Macau
Udgivet:	12. maj 2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	26. maj 2021

Document #2051571

USDOS – US Department of State

2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: China — Macau

Read a Section: Macau

[CHINA](#) | [TIBET](#) | [XINJIANG](#) | [HONG KONG](#)

Executive Summary

The Basic Law of the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR) grants residents freedom of religious belief, freedom to preach and participate in religious activities in public, and freedom to pursue religious education. The law protects the right of religious assembly and the rights of religious organizations to administer schools, hospitals, and welfare institutions and to provide other social services. The law states the government does not recognize a state religion and explicitly states all religious denominations are equal before the law. The law stipulates religious groups may develop and maintain relations with religious groups abroad. The SAR enacted bylaws to the 2009 National Security Law on October 7 allowing the Judiciary Police to create national security branches. Some members of the religious community said they were concerned Macau’s implementation of these new provisions could mirror the Hong Kong police force’s national security units and potentially affect civil liberties, although they were uncertain if the new provisions could eventually infringe upon religious freedom. Religious figures expressed no public reaction in February when China appointed as the new Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office Chief Xia Baolong, who previously led a suppression campaign against local churches in mainland China’s Zhejiang Province. At a Lunar New Year celebration, the Deputy Director of the Central Government Liaison Office told religious community representatives the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC’s) “one country, two systems” policy relied on support from Macau’s religious groups and thanked them for that support. Falun Gong practitioners held a rally on April 25 to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the mass arrest of Falun Gong members in mainland China and protest the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in mainland China.

Falun Gong practitioners continued to be able to discuss their beliefs openly with Macau residents.

In meetings with civil society representatives, representatives from the U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong and Macau stressed the importance of religious freedom and tolerance for all religious groups and discussed religious communities’ relations with their coreligionists on the mainland and in Hong Kong.

Section I. Religious Demography

The U.S. government estimates the total population at 614,000 (midyear 2020 estimate). According to a 2015 estimate by the research group Association of Religion Data Archives, 48.1 percent of the population are folk religionists, 17.3 percent Buddhist, 11 percent Taoist, 4.5 percent Catholic, 2.5 percent other Christian, 1.2 percent other religious groups (including Hindus, Muslims, and Jews), and 15.4 percent nonreligious. The SAR Government Information Bureau 2020 yearbook states the majority of the population practices Buddhism or Chinese folk religions. The yearbook does not provide an estimate for Buddhists, but it states they are numerous and individuals often practice a mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Chinese folk religions. The SAR Government Information Bureau estimates 4.5 percent of the population are Roman Catholics, of whom almost half are foreign domestic workers and other expatriates, and 2.5 percent of the population are Protestants. Protestant denominations include the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian Churches. Evangelical Christian and independent local nondenominational churches, some of which are affiliated with officially recognized mainland churches, are also present. Various reports estimate the Muslim population at 5,000 to 10,000. Smaller religious groups include Baha’is, who estimate their membership at more than 2,000, and Falun Gong practitioners, who estimate their numbers at 20 to 50 persons.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Basic Law states residents have freedom of religious belief and the freedom to publicly preach as well as conduct and participate in religious activities. These rights may be limited in extreme situations for national security reasons. The Basic Law further stipulates the government shall not interfere in the internal affairs of religious groups or in their relations with their counterparts outside Macau. It bars the government from restricting religious activities that do not contravene the laws of the SAR.

Under the Basic Law, the SAR government, rather than the central government of the PRC, safeguards religious freedom in the SAR.

The law states there is no official religion in the SAR and stipulates all religious denominations are equal before the law. The law provides for freedom of religion, including privacy of religious belief, freedom of religious assembly, freedom to hold religious processions, and freedom of religious education. On October 7, the SAR enacted bylaws to the 2009 National Security Law allowing the Judiciary Police to create four new national security branches: the National Security Information Division; the National Security Crime Investigation Division; the National Security Action Support Division; and the National Security Affairs Integrated Service Division.

Religious groups are not required to register to conduct religious activities, but registration enables them to benefit from legal status. Benefits include exemption from taxation (such as property tax, stamp duty, complementary tax [profit tax], and industrial tax) and financial assistance from the government. Religious groups register with the Identification Bureau, providing the name of an individual applicant and that person’s position in the group, identification card number, and contact information, as well as the group’s name and a copy of the group’s charter. Registered charities receive the same benefits as registered religious groups. Religious groups need to be registered as a charity under a similar or different name in order to provide charitable services.

The law states that religious organizations may run seminaries and schools, hospitals, and welfare institutions, and provide other social services.

There is no religious education in public schools. A small number of schools run by religious organizations receive no public funding, and these schools may require students to receive religious education.

By law, religious groups may develop and maintain relations with religious groups abroad.

GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

The government’s stated aim in amending the 2009 National Security Law was to improve external communications about national security and promote law enforcement. Human rights advocates said they were concerned the SAR’s new divisions mirrored the divisions that were created under Hong Kong’s National Security Law, which came into effect on June 30 and were being used to threaten civil liberties. Religious leaders said they were uncertain if the new provisions might eventually infringe upon religious freedom.

Religious figures expressed no public reaction in February when China appointed as the new Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office Chief Xia Baolong, who previously led a suppression campaign against local churches in mainland China’s Zhejiang Province.

According to the Central Government Liaison Office in Macau, in January, Zhang Rongshun, Deputy Director of the Central Government Liaison Office, held a Lunar New Year celebration with more than 30 representatives from the Catholic, Buddhist, Christian, Taoist, and Baha’i communities. Zhang said successful implementation of the PRC’s “one country, two systems” policy relied on support from Macau’s religious groups and thanked them for that support.

On April 25, Falun Gong practitioners held a rally in front of St. Dominic’s Church to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the mass arrest of Falun Gong members in mainland China and protest the CCP’s treatment of Falun Gong practitioners on the mainland. According to the Falun Gong website *Minghui.org*, practitioners set up message boards with information about the history of the group, carried banners, and distributed informational pamphlets.

Some religious groups continued to report they retained their ability to conduct charitable activities on the mainland by working through official channels and officially recognized churches.

The government continued to provide financial support, regardless of religious affiliation, to religious groups to establish schools, child-care centers, clinics, homes for the elderly, rehabilitation centers, and vocational training centers. The government also continued to refer victims of human trafficking to religious organizations for the provision of support services.

Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

The Catholic Church in Macau, in communion with the Holy See, continued to recognize the Pope as its head. The Vatican appointed the bishop for the diocese. Sources stated the PRC central government and religious leaders from mainland-authorized churches invited Macau diocese representatives to public events.

The Catholic Diocese of Macau continued to run many educational institutions.

According to *Minghui.org*, with fewer foreigners visiting the SAR due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Falun Gong practitioners interacted more with local residents, handing out information on the streets, including publications called *CCP Virus Special Editions* and *MinghuiWeekly*. According to the website, “Local residents have always treated Falun Dafa practitioners with kindness.”

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement

U.S. Consulate General representatives in Hong Kong, including the Consul General, stressed the importance of religious diversity and discussed religious communities’ relations with their coreligionists on the mainland. They raised these points in meetings with civil society representatives, religious leaders, and nongovernmental organizations.

ecoi.net summary:

Macau: Annual report on
religious freedom (covering 2020)

Country:

China

Source:

USDOS – US Department of State

Original link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/china/macau/>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

12 May 2021

Document ID:

2051571

Austrian Red Cross Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)	Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien <u>T (Telefon)</u> +43 1 589 00 583 <u>F (Fax)</u> +43 1 589 00 589 info@ecoi.net	Contact Imprint & Disclaimer F.A.Q. Data Protection Notice
--	--	---

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

