

Burundi (95)



**2000 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom:
Burundi**

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The Transitional Constitutional Act provides for freedom of religion, and the Government respects this right in practice.

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

Both government policy and the generally amicable relationship among religions in society contribute to the free practice of religion.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

Section I. Government Policies on Freedom of Religion**Legal/Policy Framework**

The Transitional Constitutional Act provides for freedom of religion, and the Government respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Government requires religious groups to register with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which keeps track of their leadership and activities. The Government requires that religious groups have a headquarters in the country. Once registered, religious organizations enjoy tax-free status, and clergy theoretically do not have to pay duty on purchased goods. However, one religious group reported that it was required to pay duty on all imported goods, except books and other publications.

Religious Demography

Many citizens regularly attend religious services. Although reliable statistics on the number of followers of various religions are not available, a Roman Catholic official estimated that 60 percent of the population are Catholic, with the largest concentration of adherents located in the center and south of the country. A Muslim leader estimated that up to 10 percent of the population are Muslim, mostly in urban areas. The remainder of the population belongs to other Christian churches, practices traditional indigenous religions, or has no religious affiliation.

The heads of major religious organizations are accorded diplomatic status. Foreign missionary groups of many faiths are active in the country and openly promote their religious beliefs. The Government has welcomed their development assistance.

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

There were no reports of religious detainees or prisoners.

Forced Religious Conversion of Minor U.S. Citizens 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

In their practice of religion, citizens generally tolerate other religions. Disputes between religious groups are rare, apart from minor disagreements over competition for followers.

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. Embassy officials also maintain regular contact with leaders and members of the various religious communities.

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