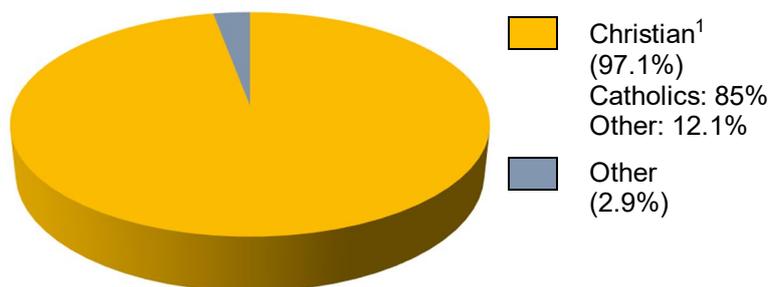


ECUADOR



Area: 272,045 km ²	Population²: 14.8 million	Political system: Democracy	Major Language(s): Spanish, Kichwa, Shuar ³
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Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

The constitution recognises and guarantees the right to practice, maintain, change and profess one's religion or beliefs, in public or in private, individually or collectively. The voluntary practice of religion and the right not to profess any faith are protected.⁴

The Religious Freedom Act recognises and guarantees to all the entities that come under its mandate, the right to engage, inter alia, in activities of worship, doctrinal outreach, education, and culture. Moreover, religious entities are endowed with rights and obligations.⁵

Incidents

In September 2014, Andrés Elías, director of the Catholic Observatory in Ecuador, slammed attacks, misinformation and lies by an "atheistic association" against the Archbishop of Guayaquil, Mgr Antonio Arregui, who was accused of describing gay people as a "virus".⁶

The Regulation for the Dissemination of Advertising in social media came into effect in November 2014. It looks at advertising involving and destined for children and teenagers. It prohibits content that can lead to discrimination, racism, substance abuse, sexism and anything that is detrimental to rights. It also bans advertising content that constitute direct incitement or explicit incentive to the illegitimate use of violence, the commitment of a felony, human trafficking, exploitation, and sexual abuse, as well as the advocacy of war and national, racial or religious hate.⁷

In September 2015 the Ombudsman's Office issued an open letter about the censorious and humiliating comments made by the judges on the show "Ecuador got talent" against a 16-year-old Ecuadorian artist, who publicly expressed her atheism. As the country's human rights advocate, the Office said that the constitution of the Republic of Ecuador grants children and teenagers all the rights inherent in the human condition, in addition to age-specific rights. The office said the priority should be the protection of their physical and mental health, education, identity, social participation, cultural rights, aesthetic, creative and artistic freedom as well as their right to express their beliefs and religion openly, if they so choose, without any distinction relating to age or sex.⁸

In February 2016, during a concert by Spanish singer Miguel Bosé, the image of the Virgin Mary was used as background to his face, which led to grave charges of desecration, of attacking the

rights, principles and values of millions of Catholics Ecuadorians, for whom the Mother of God has great spiritual significance.⁹

Prospects for freedom of religion

People have become increasingly sensitive to issues surrounding religious freedom as evinced by statements and situations that, although not in of themselves acts of intolerance, have raised awareness of this particular right. Compared to the previous period, when there were some incidents of discrimination, it is possible to say that in the period under review, the prospects for religious freedom have improved in the country.

¹ http://thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_72_1.asp accessed on 19 March 2016.

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19331501> accessed on 6 May 2016.

³ http://www.inocar.mil.ec/web/images/lotaip/2015/literal_a/base_legal/A._Constitucion_republica_ecuador_2008constitucion.pdf accessed on 1 March 2016.

⁴ http://www.inocar.mil.ec/web/images/lotaip/2015/literal_a/base_legal/A._Constitucion_republica_ecuador_2008constitucion.pdf accessed on 1 March 2016.

⁵ http://www.justicia.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2012/07/REGLAMENTO_LEY_DE_CULTOS.pdf accessed on 8 March 2016.

⁶ https://www.aciprensa.com/noticias/ecuador-denuncian-ataque-de-asociacion-atea-contra-arzobispo-de-guayaquil-49408/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+noticiasaci+%28Noticias+de+ACI+Prensa%29 accessed on 3 March 2016.

⁷ [http://www.cordicom.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2015/reglamentos/Resolucion%20CORDICOM-PLE-2014-039%20\(Reglamento%20Difusi%C3%B3n%20publicidad%20infantil\).PDF](http://www.cordicom.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2015/reglamentos/Resolucion%20CORDICOM-PLE-2014-039%20(Reglamento%20Difusi%C3%B3n%20publicidad%20infantil).PDF) accessed on 3 March 2016.

⁸ <http://www.dpe.gob.ec/carta-abierta-en-defensa-de-los-derechos-y-libertad-de-conciencia-de-ninos-ninas-y-adolescentes-en-la-television-ecuatoriana/> accessed on 3 March 2016.

⁹ http://infocatolica.com/?t=noticia&cod=26016&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=NoticiasTw&utm_source=infocatolica_atw accessed on 3 March 2016.