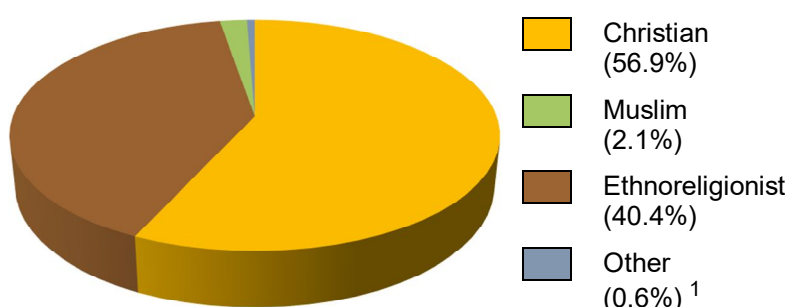


MADAGASCAR



Area:	Population:	Political system:	Major Language(s):
581,794 km ²	22.3 million	Democracy ²	Malagasy French

Legal framework on Religious Freedom and its application.

Article 1 of the 2010 constitution states that Madagascar is a secular nation, introducing in article 2 a more detailed definition of the Separation of Religion and State. Freedom of religion is enshrined in articles 6 and 10. The State demands formal registration of religious groups with the Ministry of Interior. Tax exemption for religious groups can happen when it is requested in relationship with donation money. Groups failing to meet all the requirements can be considered as “simple associations.”

Public events require a formal permit. Some radio stations closed in 2010 by the last political regime remained closed until Radio Fahazavana (Radio Light) was reopened in August 2015. Observers however point at the fact that the closure of faith-based radio stations cannot be considered simply an act against religious freedom since religious affiliation and political involvement often go hand in hand in the country.

Another issue partly related to religious freedom is the nationality code preventing children born from Malagasy mothers and foreign fathers from obtaining citizenship. Particularly Muslim believers who often carry out mixed marriages complain that they are most affected by this situation, rendering up to six percent of the Muslim community stateless³.

Incidents

No relevant incidents can be mentioned for the reporting period.

Prospects for freedom of religion

There was a slight improvement in religious freedom since the full restoration of legality and democratic liberties (starting from the last elections of December 2013) however it is expected that there won't be any significant changes in the situation.

¹ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_137_1.asp

² Since independence from France in 1960, Madagascar has experienced repeated political instability, including coups, violent unrest and disputed elections. The coup in 2009 led to five years of political deadlock, international condemnation and economic sanctions. Despite the return of democratic elections in 2013, the political situation remains fragile, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13861843>

³ Cf. *International Religious Freedom Report for 2014* UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, www.state.gov/documents/organization/238444.pdf