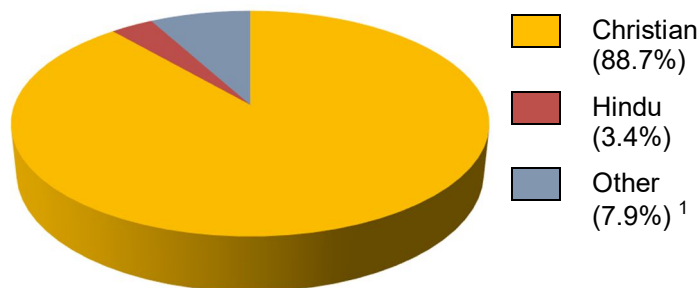
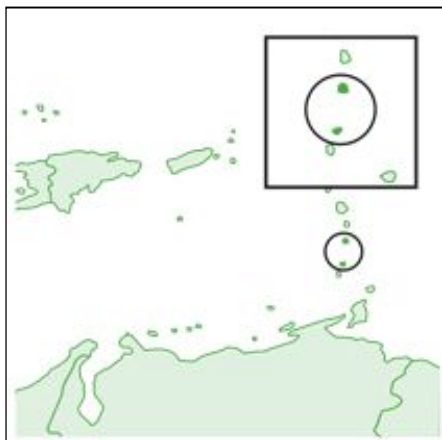


SAINT VINCENT GRENADINES



Area: 389 km ²	Population²: 109,000	Political system: Monarchy / Democracy ³	Major Language(s): English
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Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

In its preamble, the constitution states that the nation is founded on the belief in the supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man.

It states that everyone has been equally created by God, with dignity and inalienable rights. Exercising these rights is recognised in certain freedoms, such as freedom of the person, thought, expression, communication, conscience and association.

It provides that everyone has fundamental rights and freedoms, regardless of race, place of origin, birth, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, such as, inter alia, freedom of conscience, expression and association. Conscientious objection to military service is recognised.

No-one's enjoyment of freedom of conscience can be infringed. This freedom includes freedom of thought and religion, freedom to change one's religion or belief, freedom to manifest one's belief through worship, teaching, practice and observance, either individually or collectively, in public or in private.

No-one can be required, without their consent, to undertake religious education or participate in religious ceremonies other than those of their faith, either in school, prison or in the armed forces.

The constitution requires that each religious community establish and maintain its own schools at its expense.

No-one shall be compelled to take an oath against their beliefs or in a way inconsistent with their religion or belief.

Ministers of religion cannot sit in the House of Assembly as elected Representatives or Senators.⁴

Incidents

Research did not reveal any incidents of intolerance, discrimination or persecution involving official government media, Churches or other religious groups.

Prospects for freedom of religion

The prospects for freedom of religion in St Vincent and the Grenadines are good. Unlike the previous period, when Rastafarians complained about some cases of discrimination, no incidents were reported in the period under consideration. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that religious freedom has improved.

¹ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_192_1.asp

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-20006734> accessed on 9 May 2016.

³ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a constitutional monarchy and representative democracy. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state, represented by a Governor General. The country is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations: http://countrymeters.info/en/Saint_Vincent_and_the_Grenadines accessed on 16 March 2016.

⁴ http://www.gov.vc/images/stories/Gov_images/docs/1979_constitution.pdf accessed on 4 March 2016.