

Madagascar

Madagascar, a country with a population of about 22 million, is a religiously pluralistic country, with Christians making up about half of the population, as well as Muslims and a small number of Hindus and Jews and adherents of indigenous religions. The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, expression and the press, but the regime has violated these rights in many ways.

Constitution and government	Education and children's rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
		<u>Systemic religious privilege results in significant social discrimination</u> <u>Government authorities push a socially conservative, religiously or ideologically inspired agenda, without regard to the rights of those with progressive views</u>	<u>Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is severely restricted</u>
<u>There is systematic religious privilege</u> <u>Preferential treatment is given to a religion or religion in general</u>		<u>Discriminatory prominence is given to religious bodies, traditions or leaders</u>	
			<u>Some concerns about political or media freedoms, not specific to the non-religious</u> <u>Concerns that secular or religious authorities interfere in specifically religious freedoms</u>
	<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>		

Legend

Constitution and government

The Constitution and laws of Madagascar provide for freedom of religion and religious practice in general, but the unelected de facto regime, which in 2009 assumed power with support from the military, had imposed numerous restrictions on religious groups. Religious leaders' involvement in politics has led to societal tension and religious discrimination.

Family, community and society

There are numerous religious groups in Madagascar. The Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar (FFKM) represents the four principal Christian groups: Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, and members of the Reformed Protestant Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM). The greatest non-Christian group includes adherents of indigenous religions. The Muslim population is estimated to be about 10-15 percent, the majority of whom are of ethnic Indian and Pakistani origin, as well as Comoran immigrants.

Religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of the Interior, which give them the necessary legal status to receive direct bequests and gifts. A group must have an elected administrative council of no more than nine members, who are citizens to qualify for registration. Religious groups that do not meet registration requirements may register as "simple associations" which may not receive gifts or hold religious services, and could only conduct social projects.

The clerical movement HMF, closely tied with the FJKM, is usually not given authorization to hold public religious gatherings and events because they have been perceived as political activities that are aimed at opposing the regime.

Muslim leaders have estimated that about 4 percent of Muslims have no citizenship, despite having been born in the country and having family ties, since there are legal restrictions on citizenship of children of two Malagasy citizens. Sometimes Muslims have limited access to government services and financial assistance and faced more difficulty with access to basic administrative services such as obtaining a national identification card with Muslim names, and registering non-profit organization names with Arabic words.

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

Independent outlets have been subjected to government censorship, harassment, and intimidation, and practiced self-censorship. In May 2012, the transitional government sentenced Free FM editors Lalatiana Rakotondrazafy and Fidel Razara Pierre, the last opposition radio station, to a 3-month prison term, convicting the two journalists for defaming the politician Ravatomanga. In July, Free FM shut down due to government intimidation.

Freedom of assembly has faced serious restrictions since the early 2009 unrest. The transitional government's officials and security forces consistently prohibit demonstrations or repress gatherings. The freedom of association is respected in general, with hundreds of active nongovernmental organizations, which include human rights groups. Workers have the right to take part in unions, bargain collectively, and go on strikes.