

Equatorial Guinea

Formerly a colony of Spanish Guinea, the name Equatorial Guinea name evokes its location near both the equator and the Gulf of Guinea. It is the only African country where Spanish is an official language. A large oil produce, the country is deeply marked by human rights issues, including corruption, human trafficking, and and severe limits on press freedom.

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>Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is severely restricted</u>
		<u>Discriminatory prominence is given to religious bodies, traditions or leaders</u>	
<u>Official symbolic deference to religion</u>			
	<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>		

Legend

Constitution and government

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom, and these are generally respected in practice. The constitution also guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press, as well as freedom of association and assembly; however these rights are not respected in practice.

Religious preference

A 1991 law establishes religious freedom and outlines the procedures for registering a religious group with the government. A 1992 presidential decree provides additional regulations, including official preference for the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church of Equatorial Guinea.

The 1992 decree regulates registration of religious groups. Religious groups must submit a written application to the Ministry of Justice, Religious Affairs, and Penitentiary Institutions. The ministry's director general oversees compliance with the decree and the registration process. The Catholic and Reformed churches are not required to register. Unregistered groups can be fined. Religious groups must obtain permission for any activities outside of places of worship.

Government practice demonstrates the preference for the Catholic and Reformed churches. Catholic masses are a normal part of all major ceremonial functions, such as the October 12 National Day and

the President's Birthday on June 5.

Education and children's rights

The law states that each person is free to study his or her religion and may not be forced to study another faith. Religious study is optional in public schools and can be replaced by a course in social or civic education.

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

The dictatorial regime of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo is not democratic and does not tolerate criticism or political dissent. Although the constitution guarantees media freedom, the government controls most of the media directly and a 1992 press law authorizes government censorship of state and independent media. Freedom of assembly and freedom of association are severely restricted. Political gatherings may only take place with official authorization.