

Lesotho

Predominantly Christian (around 90%), with a Muslim minority in the north-east, the Kingdom of Lesotho is a small democracy (population around 2million) with a symbolic monarch. It has been particularly hard hit by the AIDS epidemic. Completely enclosed within South Africa, there have been movements to solicit annexation by the surrounding country.

Constitution and government	Education and children's rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
	<u>There is state funding of at least some religious schools</u>		<u>Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is somewhat restricted</u>
<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>		<u>Insufficient information or detail not included in this report</u>	

Legend

Constitution and government

The constitution and other laws and policies protect freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as freedom of opinion and expression. These rights are generally respected in practice, but some journalists report suffering legal and illegal harassment for criticizing the government. Freedoms of assembly and association are guaranteed by the constitution, but sometimes demonstrations are broken up violently by police.

The constitution states that "Every person shall be entitled to, and (except with his own consent) shall not be hindered in his enjoyment of, freedom of conscience, including freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance."

The government has no established requirements for religious group recognition. By law, any group may register with the government, regardless of its purpose. The requirements for registration are a constitution and a leadership committee. Most religious groups register, but there is no penalty for not registering.

Education and children's rights

The education ministry pays and certifies all teachers, and requires a standard curriculum for both secular and religious schools. Churches own and operate nearly 90 percent of all primary and secondary schools. The Catholic Church operates an estimated 40 percent of all primary and secondary schools. The Lesotho Evangelical Church, the Anglican Church, and to a lesser extent the Methodist Church also operate schools.

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

Freedoms of speech and the press are guaranteed by the constitution, but are not always respected in practice. Media outlets and journalists face severe libel and defamation penalties when criticizing or reporting on political leaders, and reporters are occasionally harassed, threatened, and attacked.