

Liberia

Located on the West African coast, most of the country is covered by dense tropical forests. Liberia was the only colony founded by the United States of America, and the Liberian flag is influenced by this inheritance. A military coup in 1980 led the country into a long phase of war and instability. It was only in 2003 that a peace agreement was signed.

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>Religious or ideological instruction is mandatory in at least some public schools (without secular or humanist alternatives)</u>	<u>Discriminatory prominence is given to religious bodies, traditions or leaders</u>	<u>Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is somewhat restricted</u>
<u>Official symbolic deference to religion</u>			<u>Some concerns about political or media freedoms, not specific to the non-religious</u>

Legend

Constitution and government

The constitution of the Republic of Liberia guarantees all inhabitants freedom of thought, conscience and religion as well as freedom of expression and the right to knowledge. (Articles 14 and 15, constitution of Liberia). The government generally respects these rights in practice. However, religious minorities report discrimination.

Government ceremonies open and close with prayers, where the prayers are mostly Christian and only occasional both Christian and Muslim.

The government persuaded public businesses and markets to remain closed Sundays and on Christmas. Only few Muslim-owned shops are permitted to operate Sundays with limited opening hours.

Education and children's rights

Education in Liberia was seriously affected and damaged by both Liberian Civil Wars between 1989 and 2003. According to the education database most of the (primary) schools are operated by churches or Christian missionaries. General public schools offer religious education, but do not require it. The state subsidizes private schools where most of them are affiliated with Christian or Muslim organization.

<classbase.com/countries/Liberia/Education-System>

Family, community and society

Liberia is a predominantly Christian country, where around 85 percent of population practise Christianity. Islam is practised by 12 percent of inhabitants and only 0.5 percent participate in traditional practices of indigenous religions.

A “secret society” known as Poro is very active in rural areas. With claims to be the country’s “traditional” religion, but heavily based around taboo and witchcraft superstitions, there have been reports of persecution against Christians by Poro members.

Homosexuality

Sexual minorities are publicly discriminated against in Liberia. In 2012 Liberian lawmakers introduced new laws against homosexuals. Liberian president [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), the Nobel Peace Prize laureate from 2012, defended the anti-gay laws and emphasised the persistence of colonial laws and traditional values.

<csmonitor.com/World/Keep-Calm/2012/0320/Liberia-s-President-Sirleaf-defends-country-s-anti-gay-laws>

In the same year an anti-gay group distributed fliers with a list of gay rights supporters. One of the activists had threatened to “get them (LGBT individuals) one by one”.

<huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/03/liberia-anti-gay-group-hit-list_n_1400066.html>

Sex between men is considered a criminal act and people who are indulging in it can be imprisoned for up to one year.

Religion and Ebola

In December 2013 the Ebola virus spread from Guinea and reached Liberia in March 2014. Liberia has proved fertile ground for conspiracy theories related to the virus. A bishop of the Christ Incorporated Church, Edward Adjei blamed the outbreak of the virus on witchcraft. He proposed to solve the problem through exorcism.

“The presidential building is our country’s gateway to Heaven, through which our leaders speak to God, but it has been desecrated. Now nobody speaks to God through the palace any more, so He has turned his back on our country. And when that happens, we lose protection against things like Ebola.”

<freethinker.co.uk/2014/10/04/mad-bishop-has-a-cure-for-ebola-vimto/>

The Liberian Observer gave an account in July 2014 of a meeting of bishops who converged to discuss the Church’s response to the epidemic. They endorsed the following resolution:

“That God is angry with Liberia, and that Ebola is a plague. Liberians have to pray and seek God’s forgiveness over the corruption and immoral acts (such as homosexuality, etc.) that continue to penetrate our society. As Christians, we must repent and seek God’s forgiveness...”

<liberianobserver.com/news-religion/god-angry-liberia%20>