

Paraguay

Paraguay is a religiously pluralistic society with a population of about 7 million. It has been estimated that about half the population is Catholic and about 20-25 percent of the population is evangelical Protestant, and there is a mixture of various other religious populations as well as people with no religion.

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>Preferential treatment is given to a religion or religion in general</u> <u>State-funding of religious institutions or salaries, or discriminatory tax exemptions</u>	<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>Official symbolic deference to religion</u> <u>Anomalous discrimination by local or provincial authorities, or overseas territories</u>	<u>State-funded schools offer religious or ideological instruction with no secular or humanist alternative, but it is optional</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>

Legend

Constitution and government

Paraguay has no official state religion and freedom of religion is generally respected. Registration with the Ministry of Education and Culture is a requirement for all religious groups, but they have no controls imposed on them, and there are many informal churches.

Paraguay recognizes the historical role of the Catholic Church. However, ministers or clergymen of any religion are ineligible to run as candidates for deputies or senators. Article 24 of the Constitution states, "Relations between the State and the Catholic Church are based on independence, cooperation, and autonomy."

<unesco.org/most/rr3para.htm>

Education and children's rights

The government gives funds to two Catholic universities and one evangelical university. Public schools do not give religious instruction but private religious schools have the option to do so.

The salaries of many teachers in Catholic and Protestant primary and secondary schools are paid by the government, but there were reports from the Catholic Church that the government withheld many teachers' salaries.

There has been friction between the religious and less religious as well as within some religious communities regarding educational issues. "I observed tensions between advocates of more traditional religious values and those promoting the right to have information about sexual and reproductive health and the inclusion of anti-discrimination principles in the school curriculum," said Heiner Bielefeldt, UN Special Rapporteur on the freedom of religion or belief.

<un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37951#.VISnYTGsWn9>

Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals

Indigenous rights

The government's greatest shortcomings in the protection of religious freedom lie in their treatment of indigenous populations. It is weak in the implementation of non-discrimination mechanisms, especially in the Chaco region. The Paraguayan indigenous peoples' have dealt with a long history of discrimination, neglect, harassment and economic exploitation. Religious doctrines and practices have been imposed on them against their will.

<religiousfreedom.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=136&Itemid=56>

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

The constitution grants freedom of expression and of the press, but these rights are not respected in practice. Criminal groups and corrupt authorities often pose life dangers and threats towards journalists, especially in remote border areas. This caused journalists to censor themselves. There are two media outlets owned by the state, as well as some private television and radio stations and independent newspapers. Paraguay has a law against defamation from the press and does not provide legal protection of the right to information. The government does not restrict or censor the internet.

<freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/paraguay-0#.VGGGt_nF9HU>