

Tonga

Tonga is a constitutional monarchy, an archipelago, spanning 800 kilometres and made up of 176 islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Constitution and government	Education and children's rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
		<u>Discriminatory prominence is given to religious bodies, traditions or leaders</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>	<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 expression, assembly and association. These rights are generally respected in practice.

There is no state religion. However, the constitution states that Sunday as the Sabbath day is to be "kept holy" and that no business can be conducted "except according to law." The government makes an exception for hotels and resorts that are part of the tourism industry but there are no exceptions for any other businesses, regardless of a business owner's religion.

<state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2004/35430.htm

2014 saw the second general election under a new democratic system with the majority of Assembly members elected by the people rather than the nobility having equal representation in voting.

Education and children's rights

The majority of primary schools are state run. Primary education is free between the ages of 6-11, and 6 years of education is compulsory between the ages of 6-14. There are concerns over the quality of state run education, with high drop out levels at secondary level and many students repeating grades at both primary and secondary level. Skills training is also lacking at secondary level.

Church run education institutions outnumber public institutions at all other levels of education. The Free Wesleyan Church runs six colleges, other schools are run by the Roman Catholic Church, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints and the Bahá'í

faith.

The government subsidises three Catholic schools that provide Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles/tonga/education_system/

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

The government-owned Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) maintains policy guidelines regarding the broadcast of religious programming on TV Tonga and Radio Tonga. The TBC guidelines state that in view of “the character of the listening public,” those who preach on TV Tonga and Radio Tonga must confine their preaching “within the limits of the mainstream Christian tradition.” All religious groups are permitted to host programs on Radio Tonga and TV Tonga, but discussions of the basic tenets of non-Christian religions are not permitted. Notices of activities of all churches were broadcast on both Radio Tonga, TV Tonga, and on privately-owned radio and television stations.