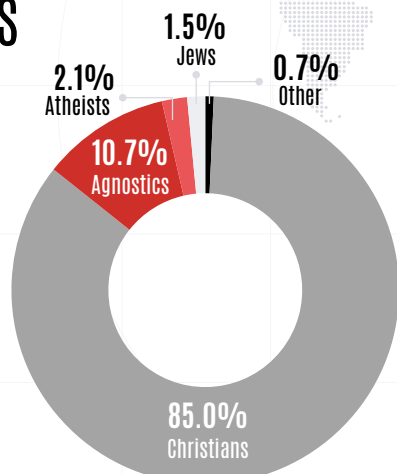




MONACO

RELIGIONS



Population

39,297

GDP per capita

43,833 US\$

Area

2 Km²

GINI INDEX*

N/A

*Economic Inequality

LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND ACTUAL APPLICATION

The Constitution of the Principality of Monaco states that all its citizens are equal in the eyes of the law, and that there are no individual privileges among them (Article 17).¹ It guarantees to all individuals, including non-citizens, “freedom of religion and of public worship, and freedom to express one’s opinions in all matters [. . .] subject to the right to prosecute any offences committed in the exercise of the said freedoms”. Furthermore, “No one may be compelled to participate in the rites or ceremonies of any religion or to observe its days of rest” (Article 23).

Roman Catholicism is the state religion (Article 9). Other religious groups must apply for government recognition, which provides them with legal rights and privileges. To build public places of worship, religious communities must file a request with the Ministry of the Interior. It is government policy to consider such requests on a case-by-case basis.²

There are several Catholic churches, two Protestant churches, one Greek Orthodox church, and one synagogue.³ The Russian Orthodox community was registered

in 2017 and holds its services at a Protestant church.⁴ According to 2018 reports, Orthodoxy overtook Protestantism to become the second-largest denomination in Monaco.⁵ There are no mosques, but Muslims can worship at a mosque less than two kilometres away in Beausoleil, France, and in private prayer rooms in their homes.⁶

In 2017, the Jehovah’s Witnesses filed a request for formal recognition with the Ministry of the Interior following a ruling by the Supreme Court of Monaco overturning the government’s 2016 refusal to recognise the community. The government again rejected the application in 2018 and the Jehovah’s Witnesses appealed that decision.⁷ In February 2019, the Supreme Court ruled against the government’s rejection, noting that the latter had not proven that the community posed a risk to public order.⁸

In March 2019, Peace and Sport and Licra Monaco organised a symbolic day honouring Josephine Baker under the patronage of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco, as part of the Week of Education and Action against Racism and Antisemitism.⁹

INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

No notable incidents relating to religious freedom were re-

ported during the period under review.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic of 2020, public religious gatherings in places of worship were prohibited for several months, but entry for private prayers was permitted.¹⁰ In May 2020, the restrictions were eased provided that proper hygiene and physical distancing measures were respected.¹¹

PROSPECTS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In the absence of reports about violations of religious freedom or bias-motivated incidents, and given the Supreme Court's recognition of a minority religion and societal efforts to combat racism and antisemitism, prospects for religious freedom in Monaco remain positive.

SOURCES / ENDNOTES

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4 Official website of the Paroisse Orthodoxe Russe des Saints Martyrs Royaux à Monaco, <http://ruscerkovmonaco.org/en/about/> (accessed 16th February 2020).

5 "Orthodoxy Has Become Second Biggest Religion in Monaco," Orthodox Christianity, 18th July 2018, <https://orthochristian.com/114502.html> (accessed 29th February 2020).

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7 L'Association monégasque pour le culte Témoins de Jéhovah c/ le Ministre d'État, 18th February 2019, Tribunal Suprême Monaco, <https://www.legimonaco.mc/305/legismc.nsf/4f5c30143dac1a53c1257fb6002aaec9/4f44cd77576b2341c125841e00373274!OpenDocument&Highlight=0,Jehovah> (accessed 29th February 2020).

8 Office of International Religious Freedom, "Monaco" (2018), op. cit.

9 'Peace and Sport and Licra Monaco Hold a Symbolic Day as Part of the Education and Action Week Against Racism and Antisemitism in Monaco', Peace and Sport, 1 April 2019, <https://www.peace-sport.org/news/peace-and-sport-and-licra-monaco-hold-a-symbolic-day-as-part-of-the-education-and-action-week-against-racism-and-antisemitism-in-monaco/> (accessed 29th February 2020).

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