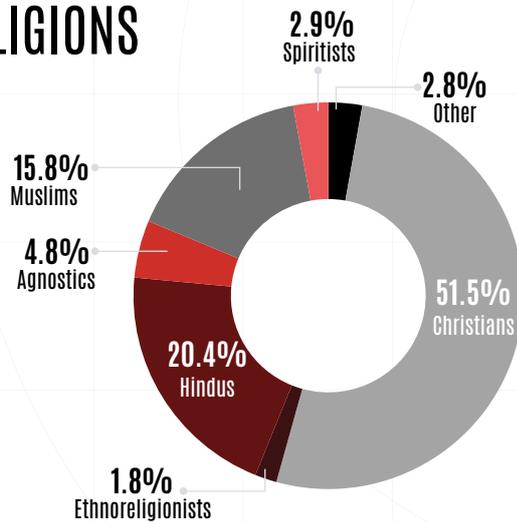




SURINAME

RELIGIONS



LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND ACTUAL APPLICATION

In the Preamble to the constitution,¹ the people of Suriname acknowledge that, inspired by the love for their country and the belief in “the power of the Almighty”, it is their “duty to honour and guarantee the principles of freedom, equality and democracy, as well as the rights and fundamental freedoms of man”.

Article 8 (2) of the constitution states that no one shall be discriminated against on the basis of birth, sex, race, language, religion, education, political opinion, economic position or any other status.

According to the constitution, everyone has the right to personal freedom and safety (Article 16, 1), freedom of religion and philosophy of life (Article 18), peaceful association and assembly (Article 20), and the protection of moral integrity (Article 9, 1) in the areas of public order, security, and health as provided by the law (Article 21, 2).

Under Article 10, people have the right to file a complaint before an independent and impartial judge if their rights

and freedoms are violated.

Workers’ rights are guaranteed by Article 28 without discrimination based on age, sex, race, nationality, religion, or political beliefs.

Conscientious objection is recognised by Article 180 (5) as acceptable grounds for refusing compulsory military service.

Religious organisations must register with the Ministry of the Interior if they want financial support from the government, including a government stipend for members of the clergy. To register, religious groups must provide contact information, group history and organisation, and the location of their places of worship.²

Religious education is not allowed in state schools. The government pays for teachers’ salaries and provides funding to cover the maintenance costs of schools run by religious groups.³

The Penal Code punishes those who publicly, and by any means, instigate or promote discrimination based on religion or creed.⁴

Good Friday, Easter, Diwali and Christmas are national

holidays.⁵

INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

In July 2020, in view of the COVID 19 pandemic, the Catholic Diocese of Paramaribo (Suriname) published a general protocol for Church activities, including the liturgy. Sacraments like the First Communion and Confirmation were postponed until further notice. Other Sacraments could continue to be administered within the established limitations.⁶

Government, Church and local media sources reported no episodes of intolerance or discrimination based on religion.

PROSPECTS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The prospects for religious freedom in Suriname are good. No cases of religious intolerance were reported during the period examined for this report. The situation of freedom of religion has not changed since 2018.

SOURCES / ENDNOTES

1 Suriname 1987 (rev. 1992), Constitute Project, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Surinam_1992?lang=en (accessed 22nd September 2020).

2 Office of International Religious Freedom, "Suriname," 2019 Report on International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/suriname/> (accessed 22nd September 2020).

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Bank Holidays of the world, http://www.bank-holidays.com/country/Surinam_167.htm (accessed 29nd October 2020).

6 "Protocol voor de liturgie en andere kerkelijke activiteiten," Diocese of Paramaribo, 5th July 2020, <https://www.bisdomparamaribo.org/nieuws-rss-feed/425-protocol-voor-de-liturgie-en-andere-kerkelijke-activiteiten> (accessed 29nd October 2020).