2023

Global Religious Recognition Report

DEDICATED TO SETTING STANDARDS & IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR RECOGNITION AND REGISTRATION ISSUES



MAJOR EVENTS

A look at the year's challenges and triumphs country by country

INTRODUCING RORB

What is recognition of religion or belief?

REPORT SECOND EDITION

What are the aims and purposes of the GRR report?

2023 Global Religious Recognition Report

REPORT INFORMATION

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Report Summary:

The Global Religious Recognition Report provides details to both academics in the field of religious freedom and human rights organisations on the structure and functions of each country and territory's recognition system, including both recognition and registration issues. Our report looks at FoRB through the lens of religious recognition by considering how states use or misuse recognition and registration procedures to control their citizens' religious activities. This report gives an overview of each country's RoRB conditions by summarising information from the First Edition of *Recognition of Religion or Belief*, a book also published by The Religious Recognition Project that covers the topic of religious recognition in even greater depth. The purpose of the Global Religious Recognition Report is to bring attention to religious freedom advocates and the broader public the scale at which recognition of religions and their communities as well as the registration of belief-based organisations are misused to the detriment of FoRB conditions overall.

More information:

Please visit www.cometan.org/rorb for the official website page of The Religious Recognition Project. To learn more about the research works of Cometan on the matters of religious recognition, please click the link: https://www.cometan.org/freedom-of-religion-specialist

If you would like to contact Cometan directly regarding any matter with pertaining to religious recognition and religious freedom, please send an email to: brtaylorian@uclan.ac.uk.

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INTRODUCING RoRB

RoRB is the acronym for "recognition of religion or belief" which itself refers to the conditions that national recognition systems are in when it comes to how they bestow both symbolic and legal forms of recognition to religious groups and their affiliate organisations. Each country possesses a recognition system; that is, legal and non-legal procedures for recognising and registering belief systems (e.g. religions, philosophies), the institutions that represent them and the communities that adhere to them. Countries vary widely on the degree to which they use their recognition systems fairly and reasonably; some have a long history of establishing a particular religion or denomination as the national religion, some, while having disestablished a previous state religion continue to provide it privileges not made available to all other groups, while other countries have chosen a strict separation of the nation state from the religious affairs of citizens.

What the research conducted as part of The Religious Recognition Project has found so far is that issues involving recognition and registration are coming to have a negative impact on people's rights to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). Further still, some countries look to be using their recognition systems and the apparatus of legal and symbolic mechanisms that they encompass to restrict or otherwise control what their citizens believe, how they express their beliefs and indeed, how they put them into practice. However, it is not purely individual rights of central concern to RoRB; in fact, what is called institutional religious freedom (IRF) is oftentimes at the forefront of erosion when recognition systems are misused which is in turn holding drastic effects on FoRB conditions as a whole. The development of RoRB seeks to bring a much needed focus to religious recognition issues as they pertain to religious freedom by identifying the scale at which recognition systems are misused, establishing a terminology to properly organise this recognition branch of FoRB and ultimately, to establish standards for what is and is not acceptable practice and policy of countries when it comes to dealing with the admittedly difficult area of how to legally register and appropriately recognise the religious and philosophical beliefs of all citizens.

METHODOLOGY

Data produced as part the Global Religious Recognition Report is the culmination of The Religious Recognition Project's monitoring of national law and policy relevant to religious registration and recognition with a particular focus on institutional religious freedom (IRF). The Report has reproduced this data through a particular RoRB lens by providing opinion and assessment on the nature, severity and actual function of policies set down in countries to deal with the over 120 variables presently identified in The Religious Recognition Project's research relevant to the overall religious recognition topic. What this means is that the Global Religious Recognition Project not only provides data on religious recognition conditions around the world but extends interpretation, opinion and assessment of these conditions expressed through the RoRB terminology developed through The Religious Recognition Project. Please note: precise definitions of most terms relating to RoRB issues may be found in the First Edition of *The Institutional Dictionary of Freedom of Religion or Belief* (published July 2021). **Please refer to the Glossary at the end of this report for definitions of key terms used.**

In addition to the Project's own monitoring capabilities, data on religious registration in particular is sourced from the United States Department of State's annual International Religious Freedom Report which is arguably the only credible religious freedom report to provide on-the-ground insight from ambassadors and embassy staff regarding the legal framework surrounding registration procedures for religious groups and organisations in each sovereign state. In addition to the State Department report, reports from Freedom House have helped to inform the Project's understanding of the impacts of RoRB on FoRB in terms of how different communities face systematic discrimination and persecution. Additional sources of information also relevant to RoRB have been GOV.UK Travel Advice to reconfirm what countries regard as illegal acts as they pertain to proselytising or religious freedom and the FedEx Cross Border Global Lists of Prohibited and Restricted Items when it comes to the topic of hieroncy (the importation of religious items into a country for both personal and distributive purposes).

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THE SRR

Classification (Countries may move and down the spectrum)	Overview (Descriptions are approximate to present known conditions and relate to actions by the state or state-sponsored entities).	Features (Countries must exhibit at least one of these features to fit into the category).
Dynamic	• The system adapts so it can recognise religions and beliefs at multiple levels and is inclusive of NRMs. • The system encompasses both a capacity both for recognition and for registration. • The system works in collaboration with a range of religions new and old to facilitate their activities (including both their day-to-day survival and growth) as well as interfaith dialogue. • The system exhibits all the essential attributes of authority, autonomy and accountability.	• An independent agency is established to handle both recognition and registration. • No undue regulations are imposed on recognition or registration. • Removal of subjective language from legislation, insertion of inclusive language and services to facilitate.
Receptive	• The system primarily accommodates 'traditional' religions and belief in contrast to NRMs which is reflected in state policy and practice. • Although the system is responsive to major registration issues, minor issues persist and it lacks the adaptability necessary to facilitate a range of religions and beliefs.	• Procedures for recognition and registration exist yet there is discrimination against NRMs. • Some minor issues and restrictions persist but no mandatory registration.
Ambiguous (Negative apathetic)	• There are neither procedures for recognition nor registration while conditions for FoRB remain unstable. • Ambiguity as to how religious or belief organisations gain recognition prevails as do state intentions. • An ambiguous country can be labelled under the subcategories of ambiguous-restrictive, ambiguous-censorious or ambiguous-terminal to correspond to FoRB conditions under no recognition or registration.	• The government has established no formal procedures for either legal registering religious or belief organisations or for recognising religions or beliefs.
Restrictive	• The registration system has several internal issues yet these are primarily administrative problems. • These issues result in the restriction of religious activity and the subjugation of aspects of FoRB yet violence is not used by the state to maintain these restrictions. • State intent is to control or limit aspects of organised religious activity through the use of registration laws.	• A rule of pseudo-mandatory registration for religious or belief organisations is imposed. • Administrative restrictions on the registration process place limits on what organisations can freely and legally do.
Censorious	• Recognition and registration procedures have critical issues that significantly and negatively impact FoRB. • The state achieves its aims of restricting religious activity by the threat and intermittent use of violence. • State intent is to suppress either all or certain religions or beliefs in favour of a privileged religion or irreligion.	All 'Restrictive' category features in addition to: • The state intermittently uses violence to enforce restrictions. • Nationwide prohibition of a religion or belief.
Terminal	• Recognition and registration are continuously misused to severely restrict multiple rights protected by FoRB. • The state achieves its aims of controlling religious activity by the regular use of systematic violence. • The state uses the national recognition system and registration procedures to suppress most forms of religious activity to ensure the dominance of a state religion, a privileged religion or belief or state atheism.	All 'Restrictive' and 'Censorious' category features in addition to: • Regular use of violence to enforce restrictions placed on religious activity. • The state orchestrates an apparatus of interlinked policies to suppress unfavoured religions or beliefs.

RoRB BY COUNTRY

Afghanistan, Islamic Emirate of

Conditions of state RoRB

2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Afghanistan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Afghanistan voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration (for non-Islamic groups) and non-mandatory (for Islamic groups only)**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no procedures established for non-Islamic religious groups to gain legal status. A Taliban spokesperson has claimed that no Christian organisations have ever attempted registration.

Key restriction tools imposed: religion by default (national identity cards include a citizen's religion; the government has claimed that declaring belief in Islam is not necessary for receiving citizenship), legal registration is made exclusive to Islamic groups, non-recognition for any non-Islamic religion or any non-Sunni or non-Shia Islamic denomination, prohibition of the Baha'i Faith.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; conversion from Islam is illegal); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic items prohibited); **monasticism** (not free; non-Islamic monastic activity is prohibited); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted to Islamic rites only); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted to Islamic pastoral services only); **proselytism** (not free; non-Islamic proselytism is illegal); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted to Islamic forms only; Afghan girls are banned from attending secondary school and university); **religious literature** (not free; illegal to produce and distribute anti-Islamic literature which can include all non-Islamic religious literature); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the abusive uses of recognition in the country; use recognition as a means to spread awareness of the acceptability of the diversity of belief; stop the use of systematic violence in order to achieve goals of restriction and censorship.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Albania, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Albania is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Protections: **Explicit protection against discrimination granted to religious but no explicit protection granted to irreligious.**

Human rights instruments: Albania is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Albania did not vote on the UDHR; Albania is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups must register with the district court as "nonprofit associations" but only if they intend to open a bank account, own property and to become exempt from certain forms of tax; a judge should be randomly assigned to the registration case within four days and the adjudication completed within one working day; units of information requested include a group constitution including details on the activities and structure of the organisation, the identities of its founders and legal representatives, the nature of its interactions with other stakeholders and the address of the organisation; registration costs $19; new religious buildings must obtain buildings permits and those built before 2014 must under a process called 'legislation'.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements (BCAs) are used in the country as a form of existential recognition but are not made available to all religious groups (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses have been denied their own BCA and have filed a court appeal to challenge the decision), borderline excessive informational requirements, there are ongoing bureaucratic issues with the legislation of religious buildings.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct procedures for existential recognition; establish a recognition agency to deal with matters of RoRB; reduce informational requirements; resolve administrative issues with property legislation and the restitution of religious buildings.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Algeria is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Algeria did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious groups must register with the government before conducting any kind of activities, even those classified as "basic" in RoRB standards and therefore regarded to be exempt from registration; participating in unregistered religious groups or activities is illegal; conducting religious activities beyond buildings not specifically registered for such purposes is illegal; information units requested as part of registration include the identity of group leaders, addresses affiliated with the applicant organisation, and biographic details, police and judicial records to prove good standing in society, demonstrate founding members reside in at least one quarter of the country's provinces to prove the association merits national standing, submit the association's constitution signed by its president and submit documents indicating the location of its headquarters.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, confinement to wilayas (provinces), dual registration, excessive informational requirements used with nefarious intent, mandatory reregistration (for all groups registered before 2012), non-recognition for non-Islamic religions, non-response to applications (several groups still awaiting "authorisation" after many attempts to register since 2012), non-response to foreign workers' visa applications, separate registration procedures for Muslim and non-Muslim groups, verticalism, prosecution of Ahmadi Muslims and Christian minorities for unauthorised gatherings, proselytising and illegal fundraising, forced closure of buildings.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted to Islamic pastoral services only); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; non-Islamic proselytism is illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; illegal to produce and distribute non-Islamic literature); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the abusive uses of recognition in the country and the body of laws that perpetuate this misuse; stop the policy of confinement, reduce informational requirements, and dismantle the vertical recognition system.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Andorra, Principality of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Andorra is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Andorra is partied to the ICCPR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Andorra is not partied to the ICESCR; Andorra did not vote on the UDHR; Andorra is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – optional registration for groups of all non-Catholic confessions under the secular designation 'nonprofit cultural organisation' but they have no legal status as religious or belief-based entities; non-recognition for non-Catholics groups; information units requested as part of registration include statutes and foundational agreement, a statement certifying the names of persons appointed to the board or other official positions in the organisation, and a patrimony declaration that identifies the inheritance or endowment of the organisation.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements, non-registration, non-recognition for all non-Catholic religions and denominations.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Either disestablish the privileges of the Catholic Church or extend these privileges to all religious groups that seek them; reduce borderline excessive informational requirements and establish registration procedures for non-Catholic religious groups.

10 Conditions of state RoRB

Angola, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Angola is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Angola is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Angola did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government requires that all religious groups register with it before conducting any kind of religious activity in the country, even those activities classified "basic." Legal registration and existential recognition are amalgamated as registration results in "legal recognition"; the government has the legal ability to forcibly close the premises of unregistered groups. The law requires 60,000 member signatures from legal residents to apply for registration and requires that at least 1,000 of the signatures originate from members residing in each of the country's 18 provinces (estimated cost is $7 per signature, creating a de facto registration fee of $420,000). Each signature and resident declaration must be notarised separately. Religious groups must also submit documents defining their organisational structure, location, methods and schedule of worship, financial resources, and planned construction projects. The law also establishes qualification requirements for clergy and requires religious doctrine to conform to the principles and rights outlined in the constitution. Legal recognition gives a religious group the ability to purchase property and use its property to hold religious events, exempts it from paying certain property and import taxes, and authorises the group to be treated as an incorporated entity in the court system. Malregistration – the ongoing Cabinda War undermines the central government's ability to apply registration law in that territory.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive informational requirements, excessive qualifications, low registration rate (four new groups registered in 2022, the first since 2000; there are 85 registered religious groups but more than 1,100 unregistered), non-response, signature quota, signature-geographic quota, excessive notarisation fees to fulfil signatures quota, unregistered groups are banned from purchasing property and holding events at their own property; Catholic Church is the only group with a BCA and whose marriages are recognised (which may indicate religious favouritism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); private expression and observance (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantle signature quotas of all kinds, begin to register new religious groups, mandatory registration must be abolished.

11 Conditions of state RoRB

Antigua and Barbuda



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Antigua and Barbuda is a secular state; state privilege (Antigua Christian Council); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Antigua and Barbuda is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Antigua and Barbuda did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – registration does not interfere with 'basic religious activities'; registration benefits include tax and duty-free concessions and the ability to own, build and renovate property in the group's name; registration is conducted online via a tax form in which the applicant must describe the group's activities. The Inland Revenue Department reviews and approves the completed form, usually granting registration and tax concessions.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, unregistered religious groups are prohibited from owning, building, or renovating property;

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish clearer differentiation between registration and recognition; establish a recognition system that is receptive to both established groups and to new religious movements.

12 Conditions of state RoRB

Argentine Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Argentina is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Argentina is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Argentina voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – registration is required for a religious group to conduct "public activities" which is interpreted to include "basic religious activities" such as a public worship; organisations must register as both civil associations and religious groups to become eligible for the same benefits the Catholic Church receives without having to register. Tax-exempt status, visas for religious officials, and the ability to hold public activities are benefits of registration. To register, religious groups must have a place of worship, an organisational charter, and an ordained clergy. To access benefits, religious groups must also register as a civil association through the Public Registry of Commerce. Registration is not required for private religious services, such as those held in homes, but it is sometimes necessary to conduct activities in public spaces pursuant to local regulations. City authorities may require groups to obtain permits to use public parks for events, and they may require religious groups to be registered with the Secretariat of Worship to receive a permit. Once registered, an organisation must report to the secretariat any significant changes or decisions made regarding its leadership, structure, size of membership, and address of its headquarters. Foreign missionaries of registered religious groups must apply to the Secretariat of Worship, which verifies the religious group is registered, authorised and active.

Key restriction tools imposed: dual registration (registration is required with both the Secretariat of Worship and the Inspector General of Justice), excessive monitorial requirements, excessive qualifications required for registration (a place of worship and an ordained clergy), non-recognition, vertical registration system (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; possibly restricted if considered "public activities" if a group is unregistered); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish two distinct systems, one to deal with existential recognition and another for legal registration as per the ideals of recognitionism; dismantle excessive monitorial requirements and qualifications as well as the vertical registration system.

13 Conditions of state RoRB

Armenia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Armenia is a secular state; state privilege (Armenian Apostolic Church).**

Human rights instruments: Armenia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Armenia did not vote on the UDHR; Armenia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not explicitly mandate that religious groups register with it, the fact that in order for religious groups to conduct many of the activities classified "basic" – activities that should be able to be conducted without prior registration or notification of the government – by RoRB standards, such as "ministering" and "performing religious liturgies", hence causing registration to be in effect mandatory. The law does not stipulate rights accorded to unregistered groups. To register as a legal entity, a religious community must present to the Office of the State Registrar an assessment from the Office of the Prime Minister's Division of Religious Affairs and National Minorities stating its expert opinion on whether the community complies with the requirements of the law that it be based on "historically recognised holy scripture." It also must be "free from materialism and [be] of a spiritual nature," have at least 200 adult members, and follow a doctrine espoused by a member of the "international modern system" of religious communities. The law does not define "free from materialism" or state which religious communities are part of the "international modern system." The law specifies that this list of registration requirements, to which the Division of Religious Affairs and National Minorities must attest, does not apply to a religious organisation based on the faith of one of the groups recognised as national minorities, including Assyrians, Kurds, Russians, and Yezidis, among others. A religious community may appeal a decision by the Office of the State Registrar through the courts.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive qualifications required for registration, membership quota, non-recognition, rights of unregistered groups remain ambiguous, some registration benefits are classified under "basic religious activities" meaning such activities should not subject to a group's registered status.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Establish differentiated systems for recognition and registration; establish clarity as to the rights provisions of unregistered groups; abolish excessive qualifications and the membership quota.

14 Conditions of state RoRB

Australia, Commonwealth of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Apathetic**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Australia is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Australia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Australia rejected the UNDRIP; Australia voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require religious groups to register in order to conduct "basic religious activities" but if groups do register with the Australian Taxation Office, they will receive tax-exemption on income or other benefits. The group must be non-profit entity to qualify. An organisation's activities, size, and permanence are some of the factors considered when determining its tax-exempt status.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, membership and longevity are factors taken into consideration when the government dispenses tax-exempt status.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a set of differentiated systems for both existential recognition and legal registration; more clarity required as to the membership and longevity qualifications required for tax-exempt status.

15 Conditions of state RoRB

Austria, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Austria is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Austria is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Austria did not vote on the UDHR; Austria is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – members of unregistered groups are confined to activities in private residences; vertical system of registration – the Austrian registration system is vertical and is marred by bureaucratic issues and onerous complexities; legal designations in descending order of privileges are "legally recognised churches and religious societies", "religious denominational communities", and "associations" (a secular designation eligible for many kinds of civil society groups). Members of religious groups not legally registered, like any individual, may practice their religion “insofar as this practice is neither unlawful nor offends common decency.” A religious group registered as an association seeking to obtain confessional community status is subject to a six-month waiting period from the time of application to the Federal Chancellery. After this period, groups that have applied automatically receive the status unless the government issues a decree rejecting the application.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, longevity quotas, membership quotas, vertical registration system (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Disestablish the three-pronged system that relies on vertical recognition and possesses inappropriate requirements; abolish longevity and membership quotas.

16 Conditions of state RoRB

Azerbaijan, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Azerbaijan is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Azerbaijan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Azerbaijan abstained on the UNDRIP; Azerbaijan did not vote on the UDHR; Azerbaijan is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious groups must register with the government in order to conduct any activities in the country; leaders or members of unregistered religious groups will be charged with fines or imprisonment. Among the public, there is a distinction between "traditional" religions and newer religions with less of a historical presence in the country. A religious organisation must submit to the SCWRA a notarised application signed by at least 50 of its members, a charter and founding documents, the names of the organisation's founders, and the organisation's legal address and bank information. The law requires the application to include information on the citizenship, place of residence, date of birth, and religious education, as well as copies of identity documents, of each of the 50 members. The application must include information on the history of the community; the forms and methods of its activities and traditions; its doctrine's approach towards family, marriage, and education; and restrictions the community self-imposes on the rights and responsibilities of its members.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, baseless denials of registration, confinement, intentional stagnations, membership quota, reregistration, notarised signature quota, religious literature is reviewed by the government before importation and publication, significant leeway, weaponisation of terms, verticalism ('religious centres' occupy a higher status than 'associations'), abuse of members of unregistered religious groups and fines levied against religious members meeting in private homes.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted; illegal for foreigners); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted with fines imposed); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Abolish the rule for mandatory registration; immediately stop retribution for unregistration; abolish restrictive reregistration, signature quota, membership quota, excessive informational requirements and confinement policies.

17

Conditions of state RoRB

Bahamas, Commonwealth of The



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **The Bahamas is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: The Bahamas is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; The Bahamas did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional registration – although there is no official mandatory registration order, the government requires religious organisations to register if they use any form of income to promote their religion or belief which in effect makes registration mandatory. The process of registration is called 'incorporation.' Groups are required to maintain a building for gathering to qualify for registration which is an impermissible requirement. There are no opportunities for tax-exempt status for religious groups but groups can be exempted from tax on a case-by-case basis. The Bahamas Christian Council is composed of leaders of various Christian denominations and is in regular, direct contact with the government. Non-Christian groups (i.e. Jews, Rastafarians, Baha'is) are also given opportunities to consult the government.

Key restriction tools imposed: issue with the qualification that a religious group must maintain a building to become registrable, verticalism, prohibition of Obeah, prohibition of marijuana use including for religious rituals.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free); however, the government's continued prohibition of Obeah limits these freedoms only to religions except Obeah.

Recommendations

Dissolve dormant laws (namely those regarding blasphemy).; establish separate systems for recognition and registration tailored to religion or belief rather than following those which are used for secular entities; reverse the nationwide ban on Obeah; the language “incorporated” is recommended to be changed as part of a broader recommendation to tailor procedures to BBOs and GBoBs as distinct from secular organisations and groups.

18 Conditions of state RoRB

Bahrain, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Bahrain is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Bahrain did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad-discriminatory mandatory registration – there exists two separate procedures of mandatory registration for Islamic (with the MOJIA) and non-Islamic (with the MOSD) groups; all religious groups must register to legally operate in Bahrain. To register, a group must submit an official letter requesting a licence to operate; copies of minutes from the founders' committee meeting; and a detailed list of founders and board members, including names, ages, nationalities, occupations, and addresses. It must also submit other information, such as the group's bylaws, candidates who seek election to the organisation's governing board, a physical address, and evidence of a bank account in a bank registered with the Central Bank of Bahrain. Religious groups also may need approval from the MOE if the public education curriculum is involved; the Ministry of Information Affairs if the group intends to issue religious publications; or the MOI, in coordination with the Central Bank of Bahrain, if the organisation receives funding from foreign sources. Individuals affiliated with Islamic organisations seeking to collect money for religious purposes must be Bahraini citizens and must receive approval from the MOJIA.

Key restriction tools imposed: confinement, different registration procedures exist for Islamic (Sunni and Shia groups register with different endowments), and non-Islamic groups, excessive informational requirements are requested as part of registration procedures that are likely to be used with nefarious intent, multi-registration is invoked, non-recognition, unregistration of any unlicensed branch of a group of foreign origin will result in the branch's closure.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; all non-Islamic religious materials are prohibited from importation); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; all non-Islamic religious literature is prohibited); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

A selection of minority groups have already received registration (though this should not be confused with the same recognition that Islam receives); abolish confinement, excessive informational requirements, and multi-registration policies; discontinue discriminatory registration procedures for Islamic and non-Islamic groups.

19 Conditions of state RoRB

Bangladesh, People's Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam)**; **Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism are recognised in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Bangladesh is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Bangladesh abstained from the UNDRIP; Bangladesh did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional registration – the government allows groups operating only one religious building to conduct activities without needing to register; however, if a group operates or seeks to establish multiple places of worship, the government mandates that the group register. Registration requirements and procedures for religious groups are the same as for secular associations. Religious groups register as NGOs with either the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) if they receive foreign assistance for development projects or with the Ministry of Social Welfare if they do not. Registration requirements include certifying that the name being registered is not already taken. Groups must also provide the bylaws/constitution of the organisation; confirmation of security clearances for leaders of the organisation from the National Security Intelligence; minutes of the meeting appointing the executive committee; a list of all executive committee and general members and photographs of principal officers; a work plan; a copy of the deed or lease of the organisation's office and a list of property owned; a budget; and a recommendation by a local government representative.

Key restriction tools imposed: an impermissible qualification of a local government representative recommendation, borderline excessive informational requirements, nominal restriction, non-recognition, registration involves a secondary procedure.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Create a separate system and distinct procedures for registration of religion or belief from secular entities; establish one agency to deal with religious recognition and registration in order to processes; abolish borderline excessive informational requirements, excessive qualifications, nominal restriction and the involvement of a secondary procedure as part of the registration process.

Barbados



2023 RoRB Classification: **Apathetic**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Barbados is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Barbados is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Barbados did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not required to register with the government to conduct religious activities classified as "basic" by RoRB standards; registration grants religious groups duty-free import privileges and tax benefits. A religious group must file the relevant customs and tax forms with the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office, along with a resolution passed by a majority of its board of trustees expressly authorising the application, plus the group's related statutory declaration.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive registration fee for the registration of a society ($750) that exceeds the $100 threshold set down by RoRB standards.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **proselytism** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a distinct system for existential recognition apart from legal registration; provide broader provisions within the legal registration framework beyond that of tax-exemption such as opportunities for state grants; abolish excessive registration fee.

21

Conditions of state RoRB

Belarus, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Belarus is a secular state; state privilege (Belarusian Orthodox Church); the historical importance of "traditional faiths" of Catholicism, Judaism, Islam and evangelical Lutheranism is recognised.**

Human rights instruments: Belarus is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Belarus did not vote on the UDHR; Belarus is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government has made it a criminal offence for religious groups to fail or refuse to register with the government.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, baseless grounds of the denial of registration, confinement of registered groups, community quota, confinement, misuse of deregistration procedures, excessive informational requirements likely to be used with nefarious intent, geographic quota, membership quota, preapproval of basic religious activities, registration involves secondary procedures, unregistration fines, verticalism.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Disestablish and dismantle the abusive recognition and registration system so that a new one that is more receptive may take its place in order for Belarus to climb the Spectrum of Religious Recognition; dissolve mandatory registration and excessive requirements; exchange vertical recognition for horizontal; provide genuine legal registration and provide existential recognition; abolish the policy of confinement, community quotas, excessive informational requirements, membership quota, geographic quota, and the preapproval of basic religious activities.

22

Conditions of state RoRB

Belgium, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Belgium is a secular state**; **Anglicanism, Islam, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and secular humanism are officially recognised by the state.**

Human rights instruments: Belgium is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Belgium voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups or individual congregations register with it or seek recognition from it in order to conduct basic religious activities although there are financial and legal benefits intertwined into recognition; religious buildings (e.g. places of worship) may also apply for separate recognition; requirements for this include transparency and legality of accounting practices, renunciation of foreign sources of income for ministers of religion working in the facility, compliance with building and fire safety codes, and certification of the minister of religion by the relevant interlocutor body; in 2022, the Flanders regional government withdrew recognition from four mosques and the Belgian Buddhist Union remained unrecognised despite having been told in 2020 that the government intended to recognise it.

Key restriction tools imposed: approval from at least two different government ministries is required for recognition (dual registration), inappropriately ambiguous qualifications (the law does not specify criteria for recognition), non-response to an application by the Belgian Hindu Forum made in 2013 to have Hinduism recognised as a religion, secondary procedures are involved in the registration process.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (not free; restrictions imposed on religious attire); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish an independent recognition agency to ensure that politicisation of decisions regarding registration and recognition does not occur; implement procedures that reduce reliance on legislative precedents and clarify any areas of policy that remain ambiguous; abolish secondary procedures of the registration process.

Belize



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Belize is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Belize is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Belize did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory – the government mandates that all religious groups register with it in order to operate legally in the country and to conduct basic religious activities. There is little distinction made between registered religious groups and registered companies. Registration allows a religious organisation to operate legally in the country; receive state recognition; negotiate, sue, and be sued; own property; hire employees; and lend or borrow money. A one-time registration fee of $148 (exceeding RoRB standards of $100) and a yearly fee of ($2.50). Requirements for registration include a memorandum of association with the government delineating the group's objective and mission, an article of association, and a letter from the Central Bank if the organisation has foreign financial contributors. The government may shut down the facilities of groups that do not register.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive registration fee, administering property is a basic religious activity so to make it a registrable activity is impermissible to RoRB standards, unregistration may lead to a group's forced closure.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish an independent recognition agency and provide greater differentiation on existential recognition with an adaptive and welcoming approach to new religious movements in order for Belize to be dynamic; greater distinction needs to be made between registration processes for religious entities and secular entities; abolish excessive registration fee and the rule that administering a property is made subject to registration as well as the rules around unregistration leading to the forced closure of groups.

Benin, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Benin is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Benin is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Benin did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with the Ministry of Interior in order to conduct basic religious activities. Registration requirements include submission of administrative materials (including the applicant's birth certificate, police record, a request letter, copy of identification, and the group's internal rules) and payment of a registration fee of 50,000 CFA francs ($81). Failure to register may result in the forced closure of the group until it registers.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, borderline excessive informational requirements, unregistration may lead to the closure of groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Abolish borderline excessive informational requirements and the stringent rules around unregistration used as the basis for the forced closure of religious groups; establish separate procedures for the registration of belief-based organisations and the recognition of belief systems themselves.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Bhutan, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Buddhism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Bhutan is partied to the UNCRC; Bhutan abstained from the UNDRIP; Bhutan is not partied to the ICCPR or the ICESCR; Bhutan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates all religious groups register with it in order to conduct "basic religious activities" as classified by RoRB standards. Unregistered religious groups can worship in private but are not permitted to organise publicly, own property, raise funds, conduct outreach activities, or import literature. Registration takes place with the CRO and involves submitting an application demonstrating its leaders are citizens of the country and disclosing their educational backgrounds and financial assets. The law also specifies the organisational structure, bylaws, and procedural rules for registered religious organisations. Registered religious groups may raise funds for religious activities and are exempt from taxes. Registered groups require approval from local government authorities to hold public meetings outside of their registered facilities and must seek approval from the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs to invite foreign speakers or receive foreign funds. The CRO has the authority to determine whether the content of a group's religious teachings is false or misleading and whether it has raised funds illegally. Government approval is required to construct religious buildings.

Key restriction tools imposed: confinement, lack of information about registered groups, non-recognition for any non-Buddhist religion, non-response to applications, preapproval, qualifications stipulated place limits on groups of foreign origin, religious buildings must conform to traditional architecture and be approved by the government prior to construction, the CRO has the authority to determine the legitimacy of a religion's teachings, the King must be a Buddhist, unregistered groups are prohibited from conducting some basic religious activities.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; illegal for unregistered groups for propagational use); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Abolish the policy of confinement, government preapproval, excessive qualifications and the rules around unregistration; dissolve aspects of the recognition system that have been established to restrict registration; establish a more receptive approach towards non-Buddhist denominations.

Bolivia, Plurinational State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Bolivia is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Bolivia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Bolivia voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – groups must register with the Office of Religion and Nongovernmental Organisations within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the process results in an "operating licence." A group that operates without registering is conducting an illegal offence which makes registration in Bolivia a mandatory requirement. The 2019 religious freedom law makes a clear distinction between religious organisations and NGOs. The religious freedom law requires all religious or spiritual organisations to inform the government of all financial, legal, social, and religious activities. To register, groups must submit notarised legal documents, including statutes, internal regulations and procedures; rental agreement documents, utility invoices for the place(s) of worship, and a site map; detailed information on board members and legal representatives, including criminal background checks; an INTERPOL certificate for foreigners; proof of fiscal solvency; organisation chart, with names, addresses, identification card numbers, and photographs; a full list of members and identifying information; details on activities and services provided by the organisation, including the location of the services; and information on their financing source(s), domestic and foreign. The fees to obtain an operating licence differ between "religious organisations" and "spiritual organisations" at costs of 6,780 bolivianos ($990) and 4,068 bolivianos ($590), respectively.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad reservations to deregister, deregistration procedures are stringent and their grounds ambiguous making groups vulnerable to baseless deregistrations, excessive informational requirements, excessive registration fees, mandatory notification of the state of all financial, legal, social and religious activities, reregistration, state definition of religion.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dissolve excessive requirements for registration and subjective legislation that could be used for purposes of restriction; lower fees for registration; Bolivia's fees are significantly higher than the majority of other country's registration fees for the same process; dismantle restrictive policies and procedures in order to become more receptive; develop procedures for existential recognition and abolish the practice of state definition of religion.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Bosnia and Herzegovina



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Bosnia and Herzegovina is a secular state; state privilege (Catholic Church, Islamic Community, Serbian Orthodox Church).**

Human rights instruments: Bosnia and Herzegovina is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Bosnia and Herzegovina did not vote on the UDHR; Bosnia and Herzegovina is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not explicitly mandate that religious groups register with, listing the basic religious activities of "charity work" and the occupation of religious buildings and places of worship as benefits of registration in effect makes registration mandatory; affiliate organisations, known as 'legal subjects', may register separately from their parent religious organisations. According to law, any group of 300 or more adult citizens may apply to register a new religious community (defined as non-Christian) or church through a written application to the Ministry of Justice. Requirements for registration include presenting statutes that define the method of religious practice and a petition for establishment with the signatures of at least 30 founders. The ministry must issue a decision within 30 days of receipt of the application. The state recognises the Islamic Community as the sole supreme institutional religious authority for all Muslims in the country, including immigrants and refugees, as well as for Bosniaks and other Muslim nationals living outside the country who accept the Islamic Community's authority. According to the law, no Islamic group may register with the Ministry of Justice or open a mosque without the permission of the Islamic Community.

Key restriction tools imposed: ambiguous grounds for the denial of registration are vulnerable to misuse, membership quota, nominal restriction, non-recognition for untraditional or alternative belief systems, signature quota, verticalism.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

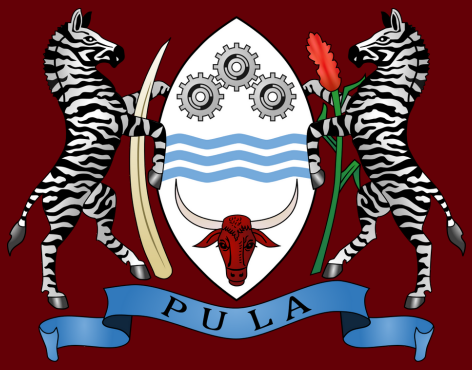
Recommendations

Dissolve intrusive registration requirements to reach receptivity; remove vertical recognition; establish an equitable recognition system; abolish the imposition of a membership quota, nominal restriction, signature and the policy of non-recognition for untraditional religious groups.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Botswana, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Botswana is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity).**

Human rights instruments: Botswana is partied to the ICCPR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Botswana is not partied to the ICESCR; Botswana did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory policy – the government mandates that all organisations, including religious groups, must register with it in order to conduct 'basic religious activities'; managing or being a member of an unregistered religious group can lead to fines and imprisonment. To register, a group must submit its constitution to the Registrar of Societies section of the Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs. Registration enables religious groups to conduct business, sign contracts, and open a local bank account. In order to register, new religious groups must have a minimum of 150 members. For previously registered religious groups, the membership threshold is 10. The amended Societies Act requires all societies, including registered religious groups, to reregister with the Registrar of Societies. It also introduces qualification criteria for the officers of registered societies, including pastors, who are required to possess theology certification from a reputable institution to ensure that they are fit to perform their functions.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, fines and imprisonment will be levied against unregistered groups, insufficient clarity on informational requirements for the registration process, membership quota, the government continues to pursue court cases against unregistered religious organisations that the government claimed were coming into the country to "take advantage of" local citizens by demanding tithes and donations for routine services or special prayers.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dissolve the retribution of fines and imprisonments for unregistration in order to move towards greater receptivity; provide more sophisticated procedures for registration and recognition in differentiated capacities; provide greater support to encourage religious and belief-based organisations and communities to establish in order to move to the classification of dynamism; abolish the imposition of a membership quota.

Brazil, Federative Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Brazil is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Brazil is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Brazil voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government states that religious groups need only register with it for the purpose of receiving tax-exempt status. Religious groups can establish places of worship, train clergy, proselytise and other basic religious activities without needing to register; registration is conducted with the Federal Revenue Office and the local municipality. States and municipalities have different requirements and regulations for obtaining tax-exempt status. Most jurisdictions require groups to document the purpose of their congregation, provide an accounting of finances, and have a fire inspection of any house of worship. Local zoning laws and noise ordinances may limit where a religious group may build houses of worship or hold ceremonies.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, localisation of tax-exempt status procedures.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Differentiation needs to be made between existential recognition and legal registration and there needs to be procedures set in place to ensure sufficient bestowal of these two separate forms of recognition; establish an independent recognition agency to handle dynamically the vast diversity of beliefs and practices found in the country so that sufficient degrees of existential recognition and legal registration are bestowed; rearrange segmented structure for registration.

Brunei Darussalam



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); official national ideology (Melayu Islam Beraja); theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Brunei is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Brunei is not partied to the ICCPR or the ICESCR; Brunei did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it in order to conduct any activities, encompassing activities considered "basic" by RoRB standards. To register, religious organisations must provide the names of their members. Applicants are subject to background checks of leaders and board members, and proposed organisations are subject to naming requirements. Registered organisations must furnish information on leadership, election of officers, members, assets, activities, and any other information the registrar requests. Benefits of registration include the ability to operate, reserve space in public buildings, and apply for permission to raise funds. The Registrar of Societies, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, oversees the application process, exercises discretion over applications, and is authorised to refuse approval for any reason. The law states that any public assembly of five or more persons requires official approval in advance. The penalty for violating laws on the registration and activity of organisations is a fine of up to 10,000 Brunei dollars ($7,500), imprisonment for up to three years, or both. The law forbids the teaching or promotion of any religion other than Islam to Muslims or to persons of no faith. Under the SPC, the penalty for propagating religions other than Islam is up to five years in prison, a fine of up to 20,000 Brunei dollars ($15,000), or both.

Key restriction tools imposed: arbitrary requirements during registration procedures, baseless grounds of the denial of registration, excessive informational requirements, nominal restriction, non-recognition of all non-Sunni groups, state preapproval of religious activities, unregistration is illegal, prohibition of Ahmadiyya, Baha'i Faith and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted to Islamic religious materials only); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; illegal to distribute non-Islamic religious materials); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Abolish the mandatory registration law and arbitrary requirements for registered status; dismantlement of the current abusive recognition system; dissolve excessive informational requirements, nominal restrictions, non-recognition of all non-Sunni groups, state preapproval of activities and the criminalisation of unregistration.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Bulgaria, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Bulgaria is a secular state; state privilege (Bulgarian Orthodox Church); Eastern Orthodox Christianity recognised in the constitution as the nation's traditional religion.**

Human rights instruments: Bulgaria is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Bulgaria did not vote on the UDHR; Bulgaria is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – in its policy, the government seems to encourage national religious groups to register with the Sofia City Court although the policy is in part stipulatory. For example, local branches of registered groups do not need to register but it is implied that the headquarters or national branch of the group is mandated to register. As selling religious merchandise and performing religious services are classified as "basic religious activity", registration in Bulgaria is regarded as pseudo-mandatory. Applications must include: the group's name and official address; a description of the group's religious beliefs and service practices, organisational structure, management procedures, bodies, and mandates; a list of official representatives and the processes for their election; procedures for convening meetings and making decisions; and information on finances, property, and processes for termination and liquidation of the group. The Directorate for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers provides expert opinions on registration matters upon the court's request. Applicants must notify the Directorate for Religious Affairs within seven days of receiving a court decision on their registration. Applicants may appeal negative registration decisions. The law prohibits registration of different groups with the same name in the same location. Registered religious groups must maintain a registry of all their clergy and employees, provide the Directorate for Religious Affairs with access to the registry, and issue a certificate to each clerical member, who must carry it as proof of representing the group.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive informational requirements, mandatory notification imposed onto local branches, non-recognition of any denomination other than the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, unregistered groups may not conduct some "basic religious activities".

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Remove some of the cited excessive informational requirements; abolish the mandatory notification policy and the non-recognition policy of any denomination other than the BOC; establish procedures for existential recognition.

Burkina Faso



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Burkina Faso is a secular state; state privilege (animism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism).**

Human rights instruments: Burkina Faso is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Burkina Faso did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require religious groups to register with it in order to conduct basic religious activities. Registration confers legal entity status, also referred to in the legislation as legal recognition. The process usually takes between 3 to 4 weeks, costs less than $81 and is handled by the Directorate for Customary Affairs and Worship within the new Ministry of Territorial Administration and Security (MATS). Malregistration – the ongoing Islamist insurgency means the central government may not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the territory it claims. MATS may request copies of proposed publications and broadcasts to verify they are in accordance with the nature of the religious group as stated in its registration. MATS also reviews permit applications by religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, borderline excessive monitorial requirements, excessive authority granted to the MATD, possible use of impermissible basis for the denial of registration or deregistration by the government's use of "moral" grounds as the reason for such actions.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (unclear); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To achieve dynamic status, an independent recognition agency needs to be established to monitor and guide religious recognition activity and its meaningful impact; dissolve borderline excessive informational requirements and ensure that separate procedures exist for legal registration and existential recognition to resolve this issue of amalgamation.

33

Conditions of state RoRB

Burundi, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Burundi is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Burundi is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Burundi abstained from the UNDRIP; Burundi did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with it in order to conduct even 'basic religious activities.' The MOI usually processes registration requests within two to four weeks. The law on religious groups does not provide broad tax exemptions or other benefits; however, the financial laws exempt from tax those goods imported by religious groups if the groups can demonstrate importation of the goods is in the public interest. The law regulating religious groups provides additional registration requirements, including respect for environmental conditions, hygiene, public order, distancing, and noise pollution. According to the law, any independent religious group based in the country filing a registration application must have a minimum of 300 members to qualify. Foreign-based religious groups seeking to establish a presence in the country must have at least 500 members in-country to qualify. The law prohibits foreigners from being part of executive and decision-making committees of religious groups at the national level. The MOI provisionally grants legal status for up to two years while registration approval is pending, in order to ensure all requirements are met. Leaders, administrator or members of groups that continue to practice after their registration application is denied or their group is dissolved by the government will face between six months or five years imprisonment, a fine, or both.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, discrimination of new, independent and foreign religious groups through the imposition of separate regulations, excessive monitorial requirements, imprisonment of members, staff and leaders of religious groups who continue to practice after registration denial, membership quotas.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not fee; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

End membership quotas and other unnecessary registration requirements; end the cited retributions; halt government involvement in the internal affairs of religious bodies and halt government monitoring of religious activity; reverse laws restricting on religious activity; revoke the mandatory registration policy; take a more receptive approach to non-traditional religious and belief groups.

Cabo Verde, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Cabo Verde is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Cabo Verde is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Cabo Verde did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with the Ministry of Justice. To register, a religious group must submit a copy of its charter and statutes signed by its members. Registered religious groups may receive exemptions from taxes and fees in connection with places of worship or other buildings intended for religious purposes, activities with exclusively religious purposes, institutions and seminaries intended for religious education or training of religious leaders, goods purchased for religious purposes, and distribution of publications with information on places of worship. Unregistered associations may conduct the same activities to the extent permitted under the law but are not eligible for tax benefits. Legally registered churches and religious groups may use broadcast time on public radio and television at their own expense. The law requires religious groups to obtain the notarised signatures of 500 members before they may begin any activities related to developing their presence in the country. Failure to present the required signatures prevents religious groups from completing their formal registration process and obtaining tax-exempt status and protections for their property and presence in the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, issue with making registration a prerequisite for a religious group's access to broadcasting time, signature quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that has the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration; remove subjective wording from the legislation in order to ensure that misuse of the legislation does not occur; revoke all restrictive policies and requirements that are inappropriate to standards of freedom of religion or belief; take a more receptive approach to minorities and NRMs as a means of moving up the Spectrum of Religious Recognition.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Cambodia, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Buddhism)**

Human rights instruments: Cambodia is partied to the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Cambodia filed an instrument of accession to the ICCPR but did not ratify; Cambodia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious groups, including Buddhist groups, must register with the government even to conduct 'basic religious activities.' The law mandates that religious organisations inform the government of their goals; describe activities; provide biographical information for all religious leaders; note funding sources; submit annual reports detailing all activities; and refrain from insulting other religious groups, fomenting disputes, or undermining national security. Registration requires approval from numerous local, provincial, and national government offices, a process that can take up to 90 days. There are no penalties for failing to register, but unregistered religious groups cannot receive an income tax exemption from the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The law also forbids religious organisations from organising events, rallies, meetings, and training sessions that are politically focused.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, ambiguous qualifications for registered status, ambiguous usage requirements imposed on places of worship, arbitrary enforcement, capacity quota for places of worship, excessive informational requirements, mandatory and separate registration procedures for each place of worship of a group, membership quota imposed on places of worship, multi-registration, no stipulated penalties for an unregistered group although unregistered places of worship and religious school may be temporarily shut down until they register, zoning quota imposed onto places of worship.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; prohibited to import religious materials); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; non-Buddhist proselytism is illegal); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dissolve aspects of legislation that are cumbersome and restrictive (e.g. multi-level authorisation, capacity and membership quotas, mandatory registration); end restrictions placed on non-Buddhist activities including proselytism and distribution of literatures; establish a system for existential recognition that possesses the provisions to protect non-Buddhist belief systems and groups.

Cameroon, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Cameroon is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Cameroon is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Cameroon did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it, the fact that to conduct some 'basic religious activities' requires registration in effect makes the policy mandatory; the registration procedure is localised rather than centralised. Religious groups considered "indigenous" by the government are not required to register. To become a registered entity, a religious group must legally qualify as a religious congregation, defined as “any group of natural persons or corporate bodies whose vocation is divine worship” or “any group of persons living in community in accordance with a religious doctrine.” The entity must submit a request for registration as a religious group and include with it the group’s charter describing planned activities, names and functions of the group’s officials, and a declaration of commitment to comply with the law on freedom of association to the relevant local office. The relevant local office then forwards the documents to the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT). Ultimately, registration can only be granted by presidential decree. Religious leaders expressed frustration with the government’s long-running failure to register new religious groups and said many requests were pending, some for a decade or longer. Malregistration – the ongoing Anglophone Crisis and terrorist attacks by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa indicates that the central Cameroonian government and may not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad grounds for the deregistration of religious groups, state definition of religion, the president has singular power to approve or deny a registration application of a religious group (authoritative decree).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Reverse the use of broad grounds for the deregistration of groups unfavoured by the government; abolish state definition of religion and the imposition of a authoritative decree; establish an independent recognition agency to deal with recognition and registration rather than governmental departments.

Canada



2023 RoRB Classification: **Apathetic**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Canada is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the Constitution Act 1982.**

Human rights instruments: Canada is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Canada rejected the UNDRIP; Canada eventually voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government only requests that religious groups register with if they seek tax-exempt status and none of the benefits of registration include 'basic religious activities.' Registration is handled by the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency. Religious organisations have to register as nonprofit organisations as there is no special designation for belief-based organisations. Nonprofit status provides organisations with federal and provincial sales tax reductions, rebates, and exemptions. To gain and retain tax-exempt status, a group must be nonpolitical and undergo periodic audits. Charitable status also grants members of the clergy various federal benefits, including a housing deduction under the tax code and expedited processing through the immigration system. The term "clergy" includes persons whose communities have licensed, ordained, or otherwise formally recognised them for their religious leadership and authority to perform spiritual duties and services within their religious organisation. Individual citizens who donate to tax-exempt religious groups receive a federal tax receipt entitling them to federal income tax deductions.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free; some restrictions around the religious attire of government officials); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that caters for both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously; to make this system dynamic, it would need to cater to both traditional or established belief systems and their derivatives as well as minorities and NRMs; this system should be complemented by the establishment of an independent recognition agency to ensure the system functions sufficiently and that does not come restrictive.

Central African Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Central African Republic is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Central African Republic is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Central African Republic eventually voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad-discriminatory mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups, except indigenous groups, register with it in order to conduct 'basic religious activities'; grounds for deregistration are broad, making them vulnerable to being misapplied. Religious groups, except for animist spiritualist communities, are required to register with the Ministries of the Interior, Public Security, and Territorial Administration. To register, religious groups must prove they have a minimum of 1,000 members and their leaders have adequate religious education. Animist spiritualist groups, regardless of their size, may receive benefits and exemptions offered to registered groups. The law permits the government to deny registration to any religious group deemed offensive to public morals or likely to disturb social peace. It allows the suspension of registered religious groups if their activities are judged subversive by legal entities. There are no fees for registration as a religious group. Registration confers official recognition and benefits, such as exemptions from customs tariffs for vehicles or equipment imported into the country. There are no penalties prescribed for groups that do not register. Malregistration – the ongoing civil war and rivalries between Christian and Muslim ethnic groups indicates that the central government is unable to enforce its registration laws throughout the country, especially due to its increased use of violence.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad grounds for the denial of registration which are vulnerable to misuse against unfavoured religious groups, broad grounds for the deregistration of religious groups, excessive qualifications and qualifications intertwined with a membership quota, membership quota, penalties for unregistration are unclear.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not subject; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Abolish excessive qualifications and membership quota; broad grounds for the denial of registration must no longer be used against religious groups unfavoured by the government; provide greater clarity on laws regarding unregistration; establish differentiation between legal registration for physical entities (e.g. organisations) and existential recognition for abstract entities (e.g. belief systems, denominations, communities).

Chad, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Implicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Chad is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Chad is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Chad was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Chad did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with its Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralised Territorial Collectivities; administrators of unregistered religious groups may be charged with fines or imprisonments of up to a year. Associations must provide a list of all the founding members and their positions in the organisation, founders' resumes, copies of the founders' identification cards, minutes of the establishment meetings, a letter to the minister requesting registration, principal source of the organisation's revenue, address of the organisation, a copy of its rules and procedures, and statutory documents of the organisation. The ministry conducts background checks on every founding member and establishes a six-month temporary, but renewable, authorisation to operate, pending final authorisation and approval. Failure to register with the ministry means that organisations are not considered legal entities and may not open bank accounts or enter into contracts; it may also lead to the banning of a group. Registration does not confer tax preferences or other benefits.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, excessive informational requirements, temporary recognition, unregistered groups may be subject to bans and their leaders levied with fines.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dissolve existent restrictions in the registration process such as rules surrounding unregistered groups, temporary recognition and excessive informational requirements; making the Office of the Director of Religious and Traditional Affairs independent from government would make the Chadian system more dynamic; revoke mandatory registration rule in order to move to Receptive status.

40 Conditions of state RoRB

Chile, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Chile is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Chile is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Chile voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require religious groups to register but offers tax benefits for those that do under the designation 'religious nonprofit organisation'. One registration per religious group is sufficient to extend nonprofit status to affiliates, such as additional places of worship or schools, clubs, or sports organisations, without registering them as separate entities. By law, the Ministry of Justice must accept the registration petition of a religious organisation, although it may object to petitions within 90 days if legal prerequisites for registration are not satisfied. An applicant group must submit to the Ministry of Justice an authorised copy of their charter and corresponding bylaws with charter members' signatures and their national identification numbers. The bylaws must include the organisation's mission, creed, and structure. The charter must specify the signatories, the name of the organisation, and its physical address, and it must include confirmation that the religious institution's charter signatories approved the bylaws. In the event the Ministry of Justice raises objections to the group, the group has 60 days to address the ministry's objections or challenge them in court. Once a religious entity is registered, the state may not dissolve it by decree. If concerns are raised regarding a religious group's activities after registration, the semiautonomous Council for the Defence of the State may initiate a judicial review of the matter. The government has never deregistered a legally registered group.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To make the Chilean system classify as dynamic, an independent recognition agency would need to be established; establish differentiation between recognition and registration in order to cater to belief systems, denominations and communities for the former and organisations and individual religious buildings for the latter.

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Conditions of state RoRB

China, People's Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **China is a hypersecular state (state atheism); official ideology (Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought); unofficial ideology (Xi Jinping Thought); Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism, and Taoism are recognised by the state as 'patriotic religious associations.'**

Human rights instruments: China is partied to the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; China is a signatory to the ICCPR but has not ratified; China voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government requires religious organisations to register with it but also states that only groups belonging to one of the five state-sanctioned religious associations can register. In effect, no new religions may exist in China – except those already self-identifying as either Christian (Catholic or Protestant), Muslim, Buddhist or Taoist – as only organisations part of the five religious associations may legally hold religious services of any kind. Applicants groups register with the UFWD, they must pledge allegiance to the CCP and socialism and adhere to the Sinicisation of religion.

Key restriction tools imposed: confinement, constriction, excessive informational requirements, registration is a precondition to a religious groups conducting what RoRB standards consider to be "basic religious activities", non-recognition of any religion other than the five already recognised, purposive localisation, state definition of religion, state theology, stringent monitorial requirements, stringent reregistration policy, unregistration is criminalised, widespread preapproval policy for all religious activities, surveillance of religious services as well as online and offline religious expression and activity.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted and subject to criminal penalties); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

The full dismantlement of the present apparatus of restrictions on religious activity achieved via recognition and registration must take place; dismantlement must entail the abolition of all laws that restrict basic religious activity or otherwise perpetuate violations of freedom of religion or belief; reinstitution must take place so that laws regarding religious freedom can be rewritten in a way that is inclusive of all groups, namely discontinuing the practice of state definition of religion; abolish current policies of confinement, constriction, excessive informational requirements, mandatory registration order, preapproval, purposive localisation, state theology, and the other key restriction tools utilised by the Chinese Communist Party to maintain control of the religious lives of citizens of the PRC.

42 Conditions of state RoRB

Colombia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Colombia is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Colombia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Colombia abstained from the UNDRIP but has since endorsed it; Colombia voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the Colombian government does not mandate that religious groups register with it, the fact that unregistered religious groups are not allowed to engage in fundraising, which is classified as a "basic religious activity" in RoRB standards, means the registration policy in Colombia is classified pseudo-mandatory; 'extended public recognition' may be granted to affiliate organisations without having to complete separate registration applications. The application process requires submission of a formal request and basic organisational information, including copies of the organisation's constitution and an estimate of the number of members. The government considers a religious group's total membership, its "degree of acceptance within society," and other factors, such as the organisation's statutes and its required behavioural norms, when deciding whether to grant formal recognition. The MOI provides a free, internet-based registration process for religious and faith-based organisations seeking recognition. Formally recognised religious organisations may collect funds and receive donations, establish religious education institutions, and perform religious services, excluding marriages.

Key restriction tools imposed: barring unregistered groups from collecting funds or receiving donations interferes with "basic religious activities", borderline excessive informational requirements depending on how the information is used regarding number of members so it does not turn into a membership quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free though not for all communities); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to recognition); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Reverse bans on unregistered religious groups be able to legally collect and receive donations due to this being classified as a basic religious activity. Resolve some of the minor issues with borderline excessive informational requirements. In order to be classified Dynamic, establish greater differentiations between existential recognition and legal registration and establish a recognition agency that works independently of the government.

Comoros, Union of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Implicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Comoros is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Comoros is a signatory to both the ICCPR and the ICESCR but has not ratified either; Comoros did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no registration procedures outlined by the government; Sunni Muslim groups may establish places of worship, train clergy and assemble freely. The government does not allow non-Sunni religious groups to assemble for peaceful religious activities in public places, although foreigners are permitted to worship at three Christian churches in Moroni, Mutsamudu, and Moheli, and foreign Shia Muslims are permitted to worship at a Shia mosque in Moroni.

Key restriction tools imposed: non-recognition of any denomination other than Sunni Islam, non-response to applications from non-Sunni groups; non-Sunni organisations are blocked from receiving registered status.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; prohibited to convert from Sunni Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; prohibited to import non-Sunni religious materials and items); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; prohibited for all non-Sunni religious groups; foreigners will face deportation); **public expression and observance** (not free; non-Sunni public expression or observance prohibited); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; non-Sunni literature prohibited); **religious and worship services** (not free; prohibited); **religious trade** (not free; illegal).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the terminal system and the entire body of restrictions imposed on all non-Sunni religious activity; this means the reinstitution of the penal code to decriminalise non-Sunni and non-Islamic forms of religious activity in the country; use of the tool of recognition as a means to educate about the importance of religious diversity and to spread awareness of the validity of minorities through the reaffirmation of their recognised, protected status.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Congo, Democratic Republic of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made.**

Secularity: **Democratic Republic of the Congo is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Democratic Republic of the Congo is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Democratic Republic of the Congo did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with it even in order to conduct those activities considered "basic" in RoRB standards. However, the government has not granted any final registration permits for religious groups since 2014 but did allow groups that had filed registration applications to operate unhindered. According to the law, the government may legally recognise, suspend recognition of, or dissolve religious groups. Mandatory registration applies for both foreign and domestic religious groups. The status resulting from registration is called 'official recognition' which demonstrates that existential recognition and legal registration are amalgamated in the DRC. A copy of their bylaws and constitution must be submitted. Religious groups are required to register only once for the group as a whole, but nonprofit organisations affiliated with a religious group must register separately. Upon receiving a submission, the Ministry of Justice issues a provisional approval and should, within six months, provide a permanent approval or rejection. Unless the ministry specifically rejects the application, the group is considered approved and registered after six months even if the ministry has not issued a final determination. Applications from international headquarters of religious organisations must be approved by the Presidency after submission through the justice ministry. Malregistration – the ongoing civil war and frequent terrorist attacks by ISIS-DRC undermines the ability for the central government to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, no permanent registration permits dispensed since 2014, registration of GFOs is dependent upon presidential decree, subsidiaries organisations affiliated with a registered religious organisation are required to register separately, temporary registration, vague "public order" narrative tool is invoked that could lead to its misuse against groups unfavoured, Muslims complain that access to pastoral services such as chaplains for those in the military, police, and hospitals is restricted to Christian groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the retribution for unregistration; remove all instances of political involvement in the registration process, namely the requirement for the Presidency to approve religious groups of foreign origin; revoke the mandatory registration rule and other restrictive policies part of the registration process.

45 Conditions of state RoRB

Congo, Republic of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Republic of the Congo is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Republic of the Congo is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Republic of the Congo did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with the Ministry of Interior to conduct any activities legally in the country. Applicants must submit a certification of qualifications to operate a religious establishment, a title or lease to the property where the establishment is located, the exact address where the organisation will be located, bylaws, and a document that clarifies the mission and objectives of the organisation. Operating without registering will lead to the fines, the confiscation of the group's goods, the invalidation of all contracts made by the group and the deportation of any foreign group members.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, informational requirements are likely to be misused against groups unfavoured by the government.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; restrictions imposed on religious attire); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dissolve all restrictive policies, particularly the mandatory registration rule and excessive informational requirements; reverse the ban on religious clothing that targets the Muslim community.

Costa Rica, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Costa Rica is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Costa Rica voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that religious groups register to worship or practice their beliefs, groups must register to conduct any kind of fundraising which is a "basic religious activity" under RoRB standards. Registration also entitles them to obtain legal representation and standing to own property. Groups register with the public registry of the Ministry of Justice and must have a minimum of 10 members to qualify. Separately, an executive order provides the legal framework for religious groups to establish places of worship. They must submit applications to the local municipality to establish a place of worship and comply with safety and noise regulations established by law.

Key restriction tools imposed: membership quota, non-recognition for any non-Catholic religion or denomination, places of worship must be registered separately from the religious organisations to which they are affiliated, registration is made a prerequisite of a group's eligibility to legally engage in fundraising, verticalism.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a system that has the capacity to differentiate between existential recognition and legal registration and that can bestow these equitably; remove the stipulation of membership quota, that registration is a prerequisite for fundraising, that places of worship need to be registered independently from the organisations with which they are affiliated and the vertical recognition system that is in effect; resolve the issue of partial recognition being in effect by establishing provisions for all groups to saying recognition on a level playing field.

47 Conditions of state RoRB

Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Côte d'Ivoire is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Côte d'Ivoire is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Côte d'Ivoire was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Côte d'Ivoire did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government requires all religious groups to notify it of their existence (mandatory notification) and for all groups to under registration procedures to conduct 'basic religious activities.' A religious group's designation as local or foreign is based on multiple factors: its funding sources, the nationalities of the members of its executive board, the location of its head office and if 75% of its members are foreign nationals. Department of Faith-Based Organisations within the Ministry of Interior and Security is charged with supporting religious groups seeking to establish themselves in the country. Free access to state-run television and radio for religious programming if requested is available to registered groups. Registered religious groups are not charged import duties on devotional items, such as religious books or rosaries. Registered religious groups are also exempt from property tax on the places of worship they own. Non-registered groups are not allowed to sue for damages or receive compensation for injuries suffered, but members of these groups may do so as individuals. To register, a group must apply to the DGC with its bylaws, names of the founding members and board members, date of founding, and general assembly minutes. The DGC investigates the group to ensure it has no members or purpose deemed politically subversive and that no members have been judicially deprived of their civil and political rights.

Key restriction tools imposed: arbitrary enforcement, different rules apply for local and foreign religious groups attempting registration, narrative tool of "politically subversive" may be misused as a grounds for deregistration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Revoke the laws surrounding mandatory registration, even if they are dormant; remove the rule that local and foreign religious organisations have different registration procedures; upon the revocation of such laws, Côte d'Ivoire should be able to move to Receptive classification; to move to dynamism, there would need to be an independent recognition agency established; also, greater differentiation would need to be made between existential recognition and legal registration with relevant and suitable provisions granted to facilitate recognition at different levels simultaneously.

Croatia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Croatia is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Croatia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Croatia did not vote on the UDHR; Croatia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government only requires religious groups to register with it if they seek tax benefits, hence groups are free to conduct basic religious activities without needing to register; bilateral cooperation agreements between the state and some religious groups provide further details on their relations. According to the law, a religious community previously active as a legal entity before the enactment of the existing law in 2002 (amended in 2013) need only submit its name, the location of its headquarters, information on the office of the person authorised to represent it, and the seal and stamp it uses to register. To register as a religious community, a religious group without prior legal status as a religious community must have at least 500 members and have been registered as an association, with at least three members, for at least five years. To register as a religious community, a group must also submit a list of its members and documentation outlining the group's activities and bylaws and describing its mission to the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration. A contractual agreement with the state, which grants a registered religious community eligibility for further funding and benefits, defines the community's role and activities and provides for collaboration with the government in areas of joint interest, such as education, health, and culture.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements (namely requiring a list of members), longevity quota, membership quotas (500 members), reregistration (all groups registered before 2002).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish differentiation between existential recognition and legal registration and ensure appropriate provisions for the execution of each are put in place; remove membership quotas and other intrusive informational requirements from the registration process; solving these minor issues with the system will see Croatia ascend to the highest classification of dynamic.

Cuba, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Cuba is a hypersecular state (state atheism); official ideology (Marxism-Leninism).**

Human rights instruments: Cuba is partied to the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Cuba is a signatory of both the ICCPR and the ICESCR but did not ratify either; Cuba voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the Law of Associations requires all religious groups to apply to the MOJ for official registration before conducting activities; unregistered religious activity of any kind is a criminal offence; denial of registration or non-response to an application effectively criminalise unfavoured groups. The application process requires religious groups to identify the location of their activities, their proposed leadership, and their funding sources, among other requirements. Even if the MOJ grants official registration, the religious group must request permission from the ORA each time it wants to conduct activities other than regular services, such as holding meetings in approved locations, publishing major decisions from meetings, receiving foreign visitors, importing religious literature, purchasing and operating motor vehicles, and constructing, repairing, or purchasing places of worship. The law regulates the registration of "house churches" (private residences used as places of worship). Two house churches of the same denomination may not exist within 1.2 miles of one another. House churches must provide detailed information – including the number of worshippers, dates and times of services, and the names and ages of all inhabitants of the house in which services are held – to authorities. The law states if authorisation is granted, authorities will supervise the operation of meetings; they may suspend meetings in the house for a year or more if they find the requirements are not fulfilled.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, criminalisation of leading or becoming a member of an unregistered religious group, denial of registration or non-response to some registration applications (as early as 1994; e.g., for Jehovah's Witnesses), pseudo-registration, restrictions persist around the religious activities of foreigners, state supervision of religious gatherings, zoning quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted and subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted and the dissemination of religious information illegal); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (not free; private religious instruction is illegal); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted and subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; restricted and subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the restrictive policies and registration requirements, primarily the mandatory registration rule and excessive informational requirements as well as the other restriction tools identified; end all means of violence to maintain restrictions on religious activity.

50 Conditions of state RoRB

Cyprus, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Cyprus is a secular state; state privilege (Autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus); beyond the Church of Cyprus, state recognition is also granted to Islam, Maronite Catholicism, Armenian Orthodox Church, and Roman Catholicism.**

Human rights instruments: Cyprus is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Cyprus did not vote on the UDHR; Cyprus is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: discriminatory-pseudo-mandatory registration – groups not recognised in the constitution must register with the government to conduct "financial transactions" and to maintain a bank account. There is no legal distinction between religious organisations and secular organisations in the law. To register, a religious group must submit, through an attorney, an application to the Registrar of Companies under the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, and Industry stating its purpose and providing the names of its directors. Registered groups are tax exempt, must provide annual reports to the government, and are not eligible for government subsidies.

Key restriction tools imposed: constitutional recognition.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish an independent recognition agency to manage religious recognition and registration in the country separate from government control in order to maintain the ectopolitical nature of freedom of religion or belief; resolve some of the minor issues in the system by making it more equitable; the lack of equitability is the primary reason why Cyprus cannot yet be classified Dynamic; remove constitutional recognition due to its inherent nature to cause discrimination and to cause communities left out to be remain unrecognised.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Czech Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Czech Republic is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Czech Republic is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Czech Republic did not vote on the UDHR; Czech Republic is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandates that religious groups register with it in order to conduct activities classified in RoRB standards as "basic". The registration system is two-tiered for groups that choose to register with the Ministry of Culture's Department of Churches. The ministry reviews applications for first- and second-tier registration with input from other government bodies such as the Office for Protection of Private Data and from outside experts on religious affairs. While the law sets a 30-day deadline for administrative decisions, it allows for extensions that can delay decisions indefinitely. To qualify for the first (lower) tier, a religious group must present at least 300 signatures of adult members permanently residing in the country, a founding document listing the basic tenets of the faith, and a clearly defined structure of fiduciary responsibilities to the Department of Churches. First-tier registration confers limited tax benefits, including exemptions from taxes on interest earned on current account deposits, donations, and members' contributions. For second (higher) tier registration, a group must have been registered with the Department of Churches as a first-tier group for 10 years, have published annual financial reports for 10 years prior to the second-tier application, and have membership equal to at least 0.1 percent of the population, i.e., approximately 10,700 persons. The group must provide this number of signatures as proof. Second-tier registration entitles religious groups to the tax benefits granted to first-tier groups and the exercise of special rights, including conducting weddings, teaching religion at public schools, and conducting chaplaincy services in the army and prisons. Prisoners may receive visits from their own clergy, regardless of registration status. Second-tier religious groups registered prior to 2002 are entitled to government subsidies.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, baseless or suspected baseless denials of registration, experts on religious affairs and other ministries are consulted on registration applications, open-ended registration, longevity quota, membership quota, signature quota, vertical registration system (verticalism), questionable denials of registration.

Basic religious activities

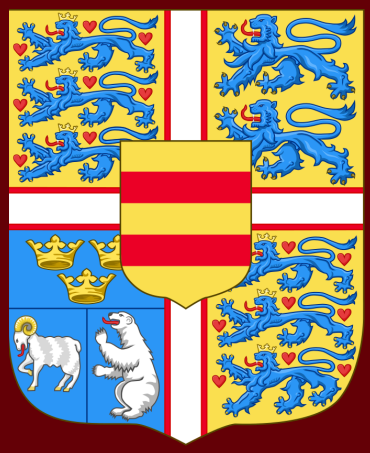
Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration as a second-tier group); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition agency independent of government that deals with and facilitates religious recognition and registration processes. Revoke the membership quotas and dismantle the elements of the system that correspond to vertical recognition in an effect to make the system fairer.

52 Conditions of state RoRB

Denmark, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Lutheranism)**

Human rights instruments: Denmark is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Denmark voted in favour of the UDHR; Denmark is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it. The Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs handles recognition and registration matters (recognition is granted to groups recognised prior to 1970 while newer groups are recognised via the mechanism of registration and up to 2023, recognised religions have received greater privileges and rights than registered ones). Congregations are not required to register by law, although registration is required to receive tax benefits. To achieve state registration, a religious community must have at least 50 adult members who have resident status and possess Danish citizenship. For congregations located in sparsely populated regions such as Greenland, the government applies a lower population threshold, which varies according to the total population of the region. Religious groups seeking registration must submit a document describing the group's central traditions and most important rituals to the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. A group applying for registration must also provide a copy of its rules, regulations, and organisational structure; an audited financial statement (which it must submit annually); information about the group's leadership; and a statement on the number of adult members permanently residing in the country. Groups also must have formal procedures for membership and make their teachings available to all members. The ministry makes the final decision on registration applications after receiving recommendations from a group consisting of a lawyer, religious historian, sociologist of religion, and non-ordained theologian. Religious groups that do not submit the annual financial statement or other required information may lose their registration status.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements, localisation of procedures for tax benefits, membership quotas (50 adult members in Denmark; lower quotas are imposed in Greenland and the Faroe Islands), privileges granted to the ELC include funding through state grants and voluntary tax-deductible contributions received through payroll and the monarch must be a member of the ELC, religious communities except the ELC are set to lose the privilege of issuing their own birth, baptismal and marriage certificates.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (not free; restrictions in religious attire particularly burqas and niqabs); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish sufficient provisions for existential recognition, not just legal registration; in order to receive dynamic classification, Denmark would need to establish a recognition agency to manage religious recognition and registration in the country that is independent of government; remove laws and stipulations that violate elements of the Durham principles; revoke membership quotas.

Djibouti, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Djibouti is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Djibouti did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it in order to conduct activities legally; the Ministry of Interior deals with religious registration and conducts a lengthy investigation of all religious groups. The investigation reviews group leadership, religious affiliation, sources of finance, and the group's objectives within the country. Ties to religious groups considered extremist, strong political agendas, and relations with unfriendly foreign nations are factors that could cause a group's application to be rejected. Domestic and foreign Muslim religious groups must also inform the High Islamic Council at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Waqfs of their existence and intent to operate. Muslim and non-Muslim foreign religious groups must also gain approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to operate in the country. Once approved, every foreign religious group signs a one-year agreement detailing the scope of its activities, and its workers must obtain work permits and purchase annual residency cards. Foreign religious groups must submit quarterly reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and renew their agreements every year. The quarterly report details activities, origin of funding for activities, and scope of work completed, and it identifies beneficiaries. Religious groups may not operate in the interim while awaiting registration.

Key restriction tools imposed: broad grounds exist for the denial of registration, excessive background investigation into applicant group leaders, financial sources and group objectives in the country, excessive monitorial requirements (in the form of quarterly reports on activities), groups may not operate in the interim while their registration is being processed, limited agreement, non-recognition of any non-Islamic religion, religion by default (citizens are officially considered Muslims if they do not specifically identify with another religious group), religious groups are not permitted to conduct basic religious activities in the interim of their registration application being processed, separate procedures exist for Islamic and non-Islamic groups.

Basic religious activities

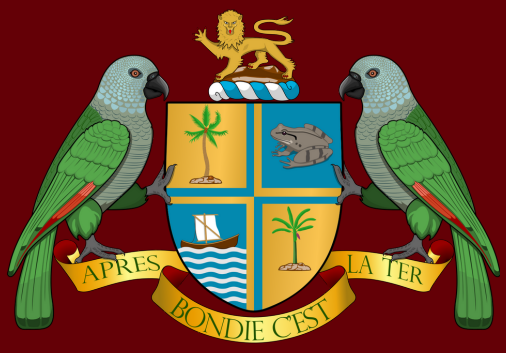
Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted to Islamic and registered Christian groups only); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; non-Islamic forms restricted to private property); **public expression and observance** (not free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Allow for proselytism for all faiths to take place and for public practice of all religions; de-politicise religious activity; revoke the country's reservation to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights regarding proselytism in public spaces; revoke the mandatory registration rule.

54 Conditions of state RoRB

Dominica, Commonwealth of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Dominica is a secular state**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Dominica is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Dominica did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it except for if they wish to obtain non-profit status; however, the law does mandate that all buildings used to publish marriage banns or as places of worship register with the Attorney General's Office, making it a pseudo-mandatory policy; judicial review of registration denials is granted as a right of registrants. To register, religious groups must submit a letter signed by five executives of the religious group and provide the official name of the group and an address identifying the place of worship. The registration fee is 25 Eastern Caribbean dollars ($9).

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, a second procedure is imposed for the registration of religious buildings, signature quota (signatures by five group executives), subregistration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Differentiate between existential recognition from legal registration; establish an independent recognition agency that can manage an established recognition system ectopolitically; remove the elements of the stipulatory registration process which may be applied mandatorily.

55 Conditions of state RoRB

Dominican Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Dominican Republic is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Dominican Republic voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it except if groups wish to be exempt from customs duties. Catholics groups do not need to register even to be exempt from customs duties. Non-Catholic groups must first register as NGOs with the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Finance. The group must provide documentation of a fixed address and the names of seven elected officers, have a minimum of 25 members, and pay a nominal fee. The group must also draft and submit statutes and provide copies of government-issued identification documents for the board of directors. After registering, religious groups request customs duty exemption status from the Ministry of Finance, which does not always grant it. Only marriages performed by religious groups registered with the Central Electoral Board are legally recognised. To register, the law requires churches to have legal status and be present in the country for at least five years, provide a membership list, and train clergy on how to perform marriages. The concordat grants the Catholic Church full access to prisons and the Catholic Church is the only religious group legally guaranteed access to prisoners.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements (provision of a membership list), longevity quota, membership quota, second and third procedures as part of the overall registration process are imposed, separate mandatory registration procedure for religious groups that intend to officiate marriages.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Democratise the recognition and registration statuses in the country; revoke restrictions involved in the registration process (including excessive informational requirements, longevity quota, membership quota, mandatory registration order, and the second and third procedures).

Ecuador, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Ecuador is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Ecuador is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Ecuador voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it as the Human Rights Secretariat has the ability to dissolve any religious group that does not maintain legal status or does not adhere to the mission, goals, and objectives listed in its bylaws at the time of registration. There are two separate registration procedures: registration as a religious organisation and registration as a civil society organisation (CSO). The Human Rights Secretariat maintains national databases of legally recognised religious organisations and legally recognised CSOs. Non-Catholics groups must register under a 1937 religion law and a 2000 decree on religion. Furthermore, if a religious group wishes to provide social services, it must register under a 2017 executive decree regulating civil society. Officially registered religious groups are eligible to receive government funding and exemptions from certain taxes, per the tax code. To register as a religious organisation, groups must present a charter signed by all its founding members to the Ministry of Women and Human Rights and provide information on its leadership and physical location. Registrants may deliver their documentation to the Ministry of Women and Human Rights directly, to one of the ministry's eight regional offices, or via email. The registration process is free of charge. The Directorate for Registration for Nationalities and Religious Organisations within the Ministry of Women and Human Rights is charged with reviewing and approving the submitted documentation. To register as a CSO, religious groups submit the same documentation required to register as a religious organisation, in addition to approved statutes and a description of the mission statement and objectives of the organisation. A religious group registers as a CSO under the government agency overseeing the issues on which the group wishes to work.

Key restriction tools imposed: mandatory registration policy.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Differentiate between existential recognition and legal registration; establish procedures for the former as well as the latter; expand the Secretariat into a recognition agency that is independent of government; remove instances of ambiguity within the legislation, set up procedures for multi-level recognition and revoke the mandatory registration order.

57

Conditions of state RoRB

Egypt, Arab Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); recognition is granted to Christianity, Judaism and Sunni Islam; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Egypt is partied to the ICCPR (but with a reservation), the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Egypt voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – registration is amalgamated with recognition in Egypt to the detriment of the former causing a situation of non-registration for religious organisations in the country as only groups the government deems as part of one of the three recognised religions are able to practise their religion and build places of worship. Islamic, Christian or Jewish groups may request recognition and obtain it by submitting a request to the Ministry of the Interior's Administrative Affairs Department. The department then determines whether the group poses a threat to national unity or social peace. As part of this determination, the department consults leading religious institutions, including the Coptic Orthodox Church and al-Azhar. The President then reviews and adjudicates the registration application.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation in favour of recognition rather than registration, prohibition of the Baha'i Faith and Jehovah's Witnesses, recognition is constricted to only Islamic, Christian and Jewish denominations approved by the government (this does not necessarily mean they will be accepted for recognition), there exists broad and ambiguous qualifications for state recognition of a denomination, unrecognised groups are prohibited from conducting some basic religious activities such as importing religious literature, establishing places of worship, practising their rituals freely and openly.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to attempt to convert a Muslim to another religion or irreligion); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Allow for all types of groups to apply for recognition and registration; lift all nationwide religious prohibitions; remove all forms of politicisation of the recognition system.

58 Conditions of state RoRB

El Salvador, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **El Salvador is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: El Salvador is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; El Salvador voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it except if they wish to receive tax-exempt status or to build places of worship, hence registration and preapproval is not required for what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". Catholic groups are exempt from registration procedures and financial oversight due to their state privilege. To register, a religious group must apply through the Office of the Director General for Nonprofit Associations and Foundations (DGFASFL) in the Ministry of Governance. The group must present its constitution and bylaws describing the type of organisation, location of its offices, its goals and principles, requirements for membership, functions of its ruling bodies, and assessments or dues. The DGFASFL analyses the group's constitution and bylaws to ensure both comply with the law. Upon approval, the government publishes the group's constitution and bylaws in the official gazette. The DGFASFL does not maintain records on religious groups once it approves their status, and there are no requirements for renewal of registration. Members of foreign religious groups must obtain special residence visas for religious activities, including proselytising, and may not proselytise while on visitor or tourist visas. Religious groups must be registered to be eligible for their members to receive this special residence visa for religious activities. Malregistration – gang members continued to extort organisations, including religious groups, demanding payments in exchange for allowing them to operate in some territories.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, Catholic organisations are exempt from registration which creates a discriminatory and vertical registration system (verticalism), many registration applications remain pending hence delaying some group's the ability to exercise the full range of activities granted through registration (administrative problems with religious groups not submitting sufficient documentation was cited as the primary cause of delays along with the impact of COVID-19).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish sufficient procedures for existential recognition; equalisation of recognition statuses and the revocation of state privilege; benefits should be available to all groups; dismantle the vertical registration system.

59

Conditions of state RoRB

Equatorial Guinea, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Equatorial Guinea is a secular state; state privilege (Calvinism and Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Equatorial Guinea is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Equatorial Guinea was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Equatorial Guinea did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it. Religious groups register at the local (congregational) level. Permanent authorisation is granted to Methodists, Muslims, and Baha'is and are not required to renew their registrations with the Ministry of Justice, Religious Affairs, and Penitentiary Institutions (MJRAPI) unlike all other religious groups that are not Calvinist or Catholic. Newer groups may be discriminated against by having to reregister annually while groups that have already registered before need only reregister biennially. To register, religious groups at the congregational level must submit a written application to the MJRAPI director general of religious affairs. Groups seeking to register must supply detailed information about the leadership (e.g., curriculum vitae) and membership of the group, construction plans for religious buildings, property ownership documents, accreditations, and a mission statement from the religious organisation's headquarters, and must pay a fee of 500,000 Central African francs (CFA francs) ($820). The director general of religious affairs adjudicates these applications and may order an inspection by the MJRAPI before processing. The government may fine or shut down unregistered groups. Under new requirements, religious groups must provide a theological certificate to obtain authorisation to operate. Residency permits remain expensive for missionaries. The law requires a permit for door-to-door proselytising. An MJRAPI decree specifies that any religious activities taking place outside the hours of 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. or outside of registered places of worship require preauthorisation from the ministry. The decree prohibits religious acts or preaching within private residences if those acts involve persons who do not live there. Foreign religious representatives or authorities must obtain advance permission from the MJRAPI to lead or speak at religious activities, but such permission is not required simply to attend services. The government recognises official documents issued by authorised religious groups, such as birth certificates and marriage certificates.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, annual reregistration may be imposed onto newer groups, arbitrary enforcement, permanent authorisations create a vertical registration system (verticalism) as do registration exemptions, registration fee ($860, up from $170 the year before) exceeds $100 threshold set by RoRB standards, registration is made a prerequisite to the legal officiation of marriages in ways customary to the religion, requalification (evangelical Christians, even those already approved, were ordered to submit their theological certificates for government review), unregistration may lead to fines and forced closures.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (not free; some restrictions imposed); **proselytism** (not free; subject to a permit); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Remove all instances of politicisation from the recognition and its procedures; remove instances of partial recognition; revoke state privileges in order to equalise the procedures for recognition and registration; revoke the existent restrictions on religious activity.

60 Conditions of state RoRB

Eritrea, State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Eritrea is a secular state; Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Sunni Islam, Catholicism, and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea are officially recognised denominations.**

Human rights instruments: Eritrea is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Eritrea was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Eritrea did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – based on a 2002 decree, the government mandates that religious groups register with it or else cease their activities and services prior to approval. Religious groups register with the Office of Religious Affairs. Each application must include a description of the group's history in the country; an explanation of the uniqueness or benefit the group offers compared with other registered religious groups; names and personal information of the group's leaders; detailed information on assets; a description of the group's conformity to local culture; and a declaration of all foreign sources of funding. While the Baha'i faith is not one of the four officially recognised religious groups, the group has registered every year since its establishment in the country in 1959 and has "de facto" recognition from the government. Religious groups must obtain government approval to build facilities for worship. The government requires all citizens to obtain an exit visa prior to departing the country. The application requests the applicant's religious affiliation, but the law does not require that information. The law limits foreign financing for religious groups, including registered groups. The only contributions legally allowed are from local followers, the government, or government-approved foreign sources.

Key restriction tools imposed: ambiguous laws on unregistration, detention for members of unregistered groups, excessive and restrictive informational requirements, government continued to deny citizenship to Jehovah's Witnesses (revoked since 1994) for refusing to participate in the referendum that created Eritrea, low registration rate as no addition to the four recognised denominations have been made since 2002, prohibition of all non-Sunni forms of Islam, state control of appointing religious leaders, state preapproval for building places of worship, vertical system (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Reduce the informational requirements imposed on groups; revoke the mandatory registration law and other restrictions placed on the recognition system such as the ambiguous laws on unregistration, the government's refusal to recognise or register any new religious groups, vertical recognition system and state preapproval of religious buildings.

61 Conditions of state RoRB

Estonia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Estonia is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Estonia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Estonia did not vote on the UDHR; Estonia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct "basic religious activities" as outlined in RoRB standards; religious groups must have a 'management board', at least half of the members of which must reside in the country, in another member state of the European Economic Area, or in Switzerland. Registration is handled by the Tartu County Court. To register, a religious association must have at least 12 members, and its management board must submit a notarised or digitally signed application, the minutes of its constitutive meeting, and a copy of its statutes. The law treats registered religious associations as nonprofit entities entitled to some tax benefits, such as a value-added tax exemption, if they apply for them. According to Ministry of Interior official data, there are more than 600 religious associations registered with the government. The law does not prohibit activities by unregistered religious associations. Unregistered religious associations, however, may not act as legal persons. Unlike registered religious associations, unregistered associations are not eligible for tax benefits. Religious societies are registered according to the law governing nonprofit associations and are entitled to the same tax benefits as religious associations. To register as an NGO, a religious society must have a founding contract and statutes approved by its founders, who may be physical or legal persons. The minimum number of founders is two. The society must submit its registration application either electronically or on paper to the Tartu County Court registry office.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, lack of autonomy on management structure for registered organisations, membership quotas.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Ensure that both traditional religious groups and NRMs are given the appropriate support they require to establish themselves in the country, not in any way hinder by unnecessary government restrictions; established differentiation between recognition and registration; streamline the levels of recognition in order to ensure the equitability of the procedures and the status they grant; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency independent of government; revoke the membership quotas currently imposed.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Eswatini, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Eswatini is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Eswatini is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Eswatini did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad-discriminatory mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with the Ministry of Home Affairs to conduct any activities legally in the country. Registration procedures are split between Christian and non-Christian groups with the procedures for the former based on a system of umbrella religious bodies. Apparently, rules mandating registration are not strictly enforced. To register as a religious group, Christian groups must apply through one of the country's three umbrella religious bodies, the League of Churches, the Swaziland Conference of Churches, or the Council of Swaziland Churches, for a recommendation that is routinely granted and does not impede registration, according to church leaders. The application process requires a group to provide its constitution, membership, and physical location, along with the relevant umbrella body's recommendation, to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Trade, which then registers the organisation. For Indigenous religious groups and non-Christian religious organisations, authorities consider proof of a religious leader, a congregation, and a place of worship as sufficient grounds to grant registration. Registered religious groups are exempt from taxation, but contributions are not tax deductible. The government does not publicise the numbers and types of religious groups registered. All prospective builders, including religious groups, must obtain government permission for the construction of new buildings in urban areas as well as permission from the appropriate chief and chief's advisory council for new buildings in rural areas. In some rural communities, chiefs have designated special committees to allocate land to religious groups for a minimal fee.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, registration procedures are different for Christian and non-Christian groups, registration procedures for Christian groups are oriented around a system of umbrella organisations meaning successful registration is dependent upon a recommendation from one such umbrella bodies, the necessity for a non-Christian registrant group to have a place of worship restricts the registration process because those seeking to build a new place of worship must either obtain permission from the government in urban areas or gain permission from a chief and their advisory council in rural areas (impedimentation).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; government permit required); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Differentiate between recognition and registration within the system and provide sufficient procedures for the provision of both; revoke the identified restrictive structures and policies in place on the registration process (e.g. impedimentation).

63

Conditions of state RoRB

Ethiopia, Federal Democratic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Ethiopia is a secular state; state privilege (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council).**

Human rights instruments: Ethiopia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Ethiopia was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Ethiopia voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it before being able to conduct any activities in the country legally. Registration confers legal entity status on religious groups and is handled by the Directorate of Faith and Religious Affairs within the Ministry of Peace. All religious groups must submit a founding document, the national identity cards of its founders, and the permanent address of the religious sharia courts to adjudicate personal status cases, provided both parties are Muslim and consent to the court's jurisdiction, institution and planned regional branches. The registration process also requires an application letter, information on board members, meeting minutes, information on the founders, financial reports, offices, name, and symbols. Religious group applicants must have at least 50 individuals for registration as a religious entity and 15 for registration as a ministry or association; the rights and privileges are the same for each category. During the registration process, the government publishes the religious group's name and logo in a local newspaper. If there are no objections, registration is granted. Registration gives groups the right to congregate and to obtain land to build a place of worship and establish a cemetery. Religious groups must renew their registration at least once every five years; failure to do so may result in a fine. Unlike other religious groups, the EOTC is not registered by the Ministry of Peace but obtains registration through a provision in the civil code passed in 1960 during the imperial era that is still in force. Registered religious organisations are required to provide annual activity and financial reports. Registered umbrella associations such as the EOTC and the EIASC are granted special privileges, with auditing only required every three-to-five years. Activity reports must describe proselytising activities and list new members, newly ordained clergy, and new houses of worship. Under the constitution, the government owns all land; religious groups must apply to both the regional and local governments for land allocation, including for land to build places of worship. Malregistration – the ongoing Tigray War means the central Ethiopian government may not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, a secondary procedure is mandated for those religious groups conducting humanitarian and development activities which is impermissible because these are included as part of "pastoral services" and are therefore a basic religious activity that should not be subject to registration, mandating that groups list new members as part of monitorial requirements is excessive, membership quotas, the government imposes the public objection restriction tool, the exemption of the EOC from registration creates a vertical system (verticalism), "the right to congregate" is listed as a registration benefit yet this is a basic religious activity that should not be subject to registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Reduction of the systematic restrictions imposed on religious groups is essential; revoke the mandatory registration rule and other types of restriction tools.

64 Conditions of state RoRB

Fiji, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Fiji is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Fiji is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Fiji was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Fiji did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with it in order to operate in the country legally. Registration law is based on a system of trusteeship for religious groups that own land but there is no mention in the law of the registration of religious groups that do not own land or property. By law, religious groups must register with the government through trustees, who may then hold land or property for the groups. To register, religious bodies must submit applications to the registrar of titles office. Applications must include the names and identification of the trustees signed by the head of the religious body seeking registration, a copy of the constitution of the proposed religious body, title documents for the land used by the religious body, and a registration fee of 2,30 Fiji dollars ($1). Registered religious bodies receive exemption from taxes after approval from the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, on the condition they operate in a nonprofit and noncompetitive capacity. By law, religious bodies that hold title to land or property must register their houses of worship, including their land, and show proof of title. Permits are required for any public meeting on public property organised by religious groups, except for regular religious services in houses of worship.

K**ey restriction tools imposed:** amalgamation, second procedures are established the registration of each building belonging to a religious group in addition to the procedures for registering the group itself.

Basic religious activities

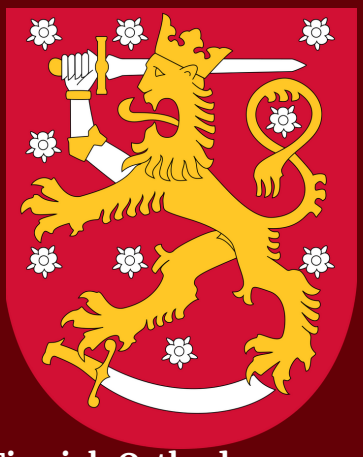
Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Remove existent restrictions and clarify ambiguous policies in order to reach the classification Receptive; set up provisions to protect and recognise at multiple levels both traditional groups and NRMs including both existential recognition and legal registration; establish a recognition agency independent of government in order to be classified Dynamic; revoke secondary procedures involved in the registration process.

65 Conditions of state RoRB

Finland, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Finland is a secular state; state privilege (Finnish Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland).**

Human rights instruments: Finland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Finland did not vote on the UDHR; Finland is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require religious groups to register in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". Religious organisations need only register to receive government funding which is handled by the Patent and Registration Office. Religious organisations register under the religious designation 'religious community'. The Finnish Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church receive government funding automatically. To register as a religious community, a group must have at least 20 members, the public practice of religion as its purpose, and a set of rules to guide its activities. A registered religious community is a legal entity that may employ persons, purchase property, and make legal claims. Religious organisations also have the option of registering under the secular designation 'nonprofit association'. Both the religious and secular designations generally exempt groups from taxes. There is a specific provision in law for persons to belong to more than one religious group at one time.

Key restriction tools imposed: membership quota, non-recognition for any non-Eastern Orthodox or non-Lutheran religion due to their state privilege, the stipulated qualification that a group must have the "public practice of religion as its purpose" is fairly broad and vulnerable to misuse.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Differentiate between existential recognition and legal registration; remove some minor issues of inequality within the recognition system; revoke the membership quota and policy of non-recognition; to be classified Dynamic, a recognition agency independent of government would need to be established.

French Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **France is a secular state (laïcité)**

Human rights instruments: France is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; France voted in favour of the UDHR; France is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require religious groups to register in order for them to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". Existential recognition and legal registration are amalgamated in France as the result of registration is described as "official recognition" which includes tax-exempt status. Religious groups may register under two categories: associations of worship, which are exempt from taxes; and cultural associations, which normally are not exempt. Associations in either category are subject to fiscal oversight by the state. An association of worship may organise only religious activities. Although not tax-exempt, a cultural association may engage in for-profit as well as nonprofit activity and receive government subsidies for its cultural and educational operations. Religious groups normally register under both categories. For example, Catholics perform religious activities through their associations of worship and operate schools through their cultural associations. Religious groups must apply at the local prefecture (the administrative body, headed by a prefect, that represents the central government in each department). To qualify as an association of worship, the group's sole purpose must be the practice of religion, which may include liturgical services and practices, religious training, and the construction of buildings serving the religious group. The association must also engage in public worship and respect public order. Among excluded activities are those that are purely cultural, social, or humanitarian in nature. To apply for tax-exempt status, the association must provide to the prefecture its estimated budget for the year, annual accounts for the previous three years or since the association's creation, whichever is shorter, a written justification of eligibility for the status, and the number of members of the association. In Paris, the association must have a minimum of 25 members. Once granted, the association may use the tax-exempt status nationwide. The government does not tax associations of worship on donations they receive. If the prefecture determines an association is not in conformity with its tax-exempt status, however, the government may change that status and require the association to pay taxes at a rate of 60 percent on past, as well as future, donations until it regains tax-exempt status.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, informational requirements could be subject to misuse against unfavoured groups, membership quota (applied in Paris only), provincialisation of registration procedures, state definition of religion established through the stipulation of ambiguous qualifications for registration, the MIVILUDES has excessive authority to designate religions as 'cults'.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; reported cases of government interference with some groups, primarily Jehovah's Witnesses); **public expression and observance** (free; however, restrictions on religious attire in certain industries and for government officials); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Ensure that the French government's approach is to facilitate developments and religion and philosophy; establish a recognition agency independent of government for the ensuring that existential recognition is provided for; this should allow France to be classified as Dynamic; provisions need to be put in place to ensure existential recognition is bestowed.

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Gabonese Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Gabon is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Gabon is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Gabon did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all associations, including religious groups, register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". Registration is handled by the Ministry of Interior (MOI). The MOI has in the past rejected applications for lack of documentation and "authenticity". Registered groups are eligible for exemptions from fees for land use and fees for construction permits. To register, a group must present to the MOI copies of its founding statutes and internal rules, a letter attesting to publication of these documents in the applicable local administrative bulletin, a formal letter of request for registration addressed to the MOI, a property lease, the police records of the group's leaders, and the group's bank statements. The registration fee is 10,000 CFA francs ($16). Registered religious groups must also provide the MOI with proof of nonprofit status to receive exemptions from local taxes and customs duties on imports. The MOI maintains an official registry of religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, baseless and mass denials of registration, informational requirements are excessive and could be easily misused to discriminate against groups unfavoured by the state, broad grounds for group deregistration are vulnerable to misuse against those unfavoured groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish procedures so that existential recognition may be bestowed and then differentiated from legal registration; rectification of the unstructuredness and the ambiguity in the legislation; revoke the mandatory registration order, the excessive informational requirements and stop the misuse of deregistration against religious groups unfavoured by the government.

Gambia, Republic of The



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **The Gambia is a secular state**; **state privilege (Islam)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Gambia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Gambia was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Gambia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and non-registration**

Registration policy: conditional mandatory registration – although there are no formal procedures set out for the registration of religious groups (non-registration), the mandate that all organisations that provide social services – which is often a central function of religious institutions – must register with the government essentially institutes a conditional mandatory registration policy for religious groups. There is no distinction made between secular and faith-based NGOs. The Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs is responsible for issues related to religious affairs in the country. Faith-based groups that provide the same social services as nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) must meet the same eligibility criteria as other NGOs. By law, all NGOs are required to register with the NGO Affairs Agency and as charities at the attorney general's chambers. They are required to have governing boards of directors composed of at least seven members responsible for policy and major administrative decisions, including internal control. The law also requires that all NGOs submit to the NGO Affairs Agency a detailed annual work program and budget, a detailed annual report highlighting progress on activities undertaken during the year, work plans for the following year, and financial statements audited by NGO Affairs Agency-approved auditors. The government has stated the submissions help the NGO Affairs Agency monitor NGO activities.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, membership quota (possibly via a signature quota), the extensive monitorial requirements could be easily misused to the disadvantage of groups unfavoured by the state.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Sunni groups must obtain government approval); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that has capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration in differentiation; establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system; the more independent this agency is from the government the more dynamic the country will become because its system and agency for recognition will not suffer from politicisation; reduce discrimination by educating the public about the importance of religious and belief diversity and promote religious education in schools of all different kinds of communities of belief; revoke the imposed membership quota and signature quota as well as the extensive monitorial requirements.

Georgia



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Georgia is a secular state; state privilege (Georgian Orthodox Church); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Georgia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Georgia abstained from voting on the UNDRIP; Georgia did not vote on the UDHR; Georgia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards describe as "basic religious activities"; registration is handled by the National Agency of the Public Registry (NAPR); there are two statuses of registration: legal entity under public law and non-commercial entity; both statuses offer equivalent benefits, including legal recognition, tax exemptions for donations and other "religious activities" (a term not clearly defined by law), and the right to own property and open bank accounts. The civil code defines the activities and rights of denominations registered for legal entity under public law status. Unregistered religious groups may conduct religious activities but do not receive the legal status or benefits conferred on registered groups. Unregistered religious groups may have a charter and ownership of property may be based on that charter. The property should be registered with the National Registrar. They may maintain a bank account with a commercial bank, based on national bank regulations. Unregistered groups may also invite clergy to the country. To register as a legal entity under public law, the law specifies a religious group must have a historic link with the country or be recognised as a religion "by the legislation of the member states of the Council of Europe." A religious group must also submit to the NAPR information regarding its objectives and procedures and a list of its founders and the members of its governing body. Religious groups registering as noncommercial entities do not have to demonstrate historic ties to the country or recognition by Council of Europe members but must submit to the NAPR similar information on their objectives, governing procedures, and names of founders and members of their governing body. There is no appeal mechanism for groups that are denied registration as a legal entity under public law, but they may reapply to the NAPR. The state recognises only civil marriages; it does not recognise marriages conducted by the GOC or other religious groups, regardless of their registration status. The law grants the GOC exceptions from several requirements applicable to other religious groups, including payment of taxes on the construction, restoration, and maintenance of religious buildings and the payment of taxes on property. It exempts the GOC, but not other religious groups, from taxes on "profit from the sale of crosses, candles, icons, books, and calendars used for religious purposes". Malregistration – the central government does not have the capacity to enforce its registration laws in the separatist republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, the stipulated qualifications for registered status are intentionally ambiguous to restrict LEPL status, the stipulated qualifications for registered status also invoke the international recognition restriction tool (or internationalism), vertical registration system (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Remove ambiguity from the legislation and also revoke subjective requirements; revoke instances of partial recognition to ensure equality within the recognition system; revoke the vertical structure of the registration system.

Germany, Federal Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Germany is a secular state**; **state privilege (Calvinism, Catholicism and Lutheranism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Germany is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Germany did not vote on the UDHR; Germany is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards described as "basic religious activities". Religious groups are only required to register if they seek tax-exempt status. There is a vertical system in place that includes two statuses: nonprofit association and public law corporation (PLC). Any religious group may request PLC status, which, if granted, entitles the group to levy tithes. According to the constitution, the decision to grant PLC status is made at the state level. Individual states base PLC status decisions on a number of varying qualifications, including an assurance of the group's permanence, size, and respect for the constitutional order and fundamental rights of individuals. Religious groups wishing to qualify as nonprofit associations with tax-exempt status must register. State-level authorities review registration submissions and routinely grant tax-exempt status; if challenged, their decisions are subject to judicial review. Those applying for tax-exempt status must provide evidence they are a religious group through their statutes, history, and activities.

Recognition policy: the law permits the federal government to characterise "nontraditional" religious groups – such as the COS – as "sects," "youth religions," and "youth sects" and allows the government to provide "accurate information" or warnings about them to the public. The law does not permit the government to use terms such as "destructive," "pseudo-religious," or "manipulative" when referring to these groups. Several past court decisions ruled that the government must remain neutral toward a religion and may provide a warning to the public only if an "offer" by a religious group would endanger the basic rights of an individual or place the individual in a state of physical or financial dependence.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive authority of the government to label a religion such as Scientology as dangerous, provincialisation (registration procedures are conducted at the provincial rather than federal level in Germany), qualifications for PLC status are vague and ambiguous making them vulnerable to misuse also meaning possible imposition of a membership quota, vertical registration system is instituted (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions to bestow existential recognition in addition to the existent legal registration available; revoke the provincially segmented structure of the recognition system to ensure universal bestowal; clarification on this aspect of the system and alterations made to it will raise Germany to Receptive status; revoke the provincialisation procedure in the registration system and its vertical structure; to achieve Dynamic status, a recognition agency would need to be established that is independent of government.

Ghana, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Ghana is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Ghana is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Ghana did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards describe as "basic religious activities." Existential recognition and legal registration are amalgamated which is reflected in the fact that a completed registration is described as resulting in "formal government recognition." Registration also results in a religious group obtaining legal entity status. There is no prescribed penalty for unregistration. Registration is handled by the Office of the Registrar General in the Ministry of Justice. The registration cost for religious groups is slightly lower than the fee for nongovernmental organisations. To register, groups must fill out a form and pay a fee of 270 cedis ($28). Most indigenous religious groups tend not to register. According to law, registered religious groups are exempt from paying taxes on nonprofit religious, charitable, and educational activities. Religious groups are required to pay taxes, on a pay-as-earned basis, on for-profit business activities, such as church-operated private schools and universities.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, lack of distinction between the registration of secular and belief-based organisations, the registration fee is undisclosed.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for the existential recognition and legal registration of religious and belief distinct from procedures for secular entities; rid the system of any unstructured elements and make clarifications on elements of religious life that have not been specifically addressed in present legislation; publish the registration fee imposed by the state; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency independent of government.

Hellenic Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Orthodox Church of Greece); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Greece is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Greece voted in favour of the UDHR; Greece is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government doesn't explicitly mandate that religious groups register with it, the fact that a religious group's administration of religious buildings and conducting of charity work is contingent on registration demonstrates that registration is in effect mandatory. Under a 2014 law, the application process requires documents proving the group has "open rituals and no secret doctrines," a list of 300 signatory members, a qualified leader who is legally in the country, and proof (e.g., each group's charter of association) the entity's practices do not threaten public order. Under the law, all religious officials of known religions and official religious legal entities, including the Greek Orthodox Church, the muftiates of Thrace, and the Jewish Community of Greece, must register with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The law provides an alternate method to obtain government recognition: a group with at least one valid permit to operate a place of worship acquires legal protection as a "known religion" and has benefits that include exemption from taxes and municipal fees for property used solely for religious purposes. The terms "houses or places of prayer or worship" are used interchangeably; it is at the discretion of a religious group to determine its term of preference. Membership requirements for house of prayer permits differ from the requirements for official recognition of religious legal entities. Local urban planning departments must certify facilities meet minimum safety standards. Once a house of worship receives the required approvals, the religious group must submit a description of its basic principles and rituals and a biography of the religious minister or leader to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs for final approval. The application for a house of prayer or worship permit requires at least five signatory group members. The leaders of a religious group applying for a house of prayer permit must be Greek citizens, EU nationals, or legal residents of the country and must possess other professional qualifications, including relevant education and experience. A separate permit is required for each physical location.

Recognition policy: the constitution allows prosecutors to seize publications that "offend Christianity" or other "known religions," which are defined as groups with at least one valid permit to operate a place of prayer or worship.

Key restriction tools imposed: public order narrative tool is invoked, mandatory registration for religious leaders (leader registration), registration requirements disallow multiformism, signature quota, secondary procedure of registration is imposed, vertical recognition system is instituted (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; prohibited though this law is dormant); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to state supervision and possibly subject to registration); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Equalise all provisions by the registration system; establish provisions for existential recognition; revoke dormant laws on proselytism, signature quota, the secondary procedure involved in the registration system and the mandatory registration order.

Grenada



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Grenada is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Grenada is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Grenada was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Grenada did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require that religious groups register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". To qualify for customs and tax exemptions, a religious group must obtain recognition from the government under the secular designation nongovernmental organisation (NGO). The group must also register with the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office (CAIPO) and with the Inland Revenue Office in the Ministry of Finance, and it must provide a letter of request to the ministry. The Attorney General grants final approval, and the ministry grants applications for tax exemptions; these are routinely approved. To be recognised as an NGO, the group must submit details to CAIPO regarding the organisation, including information about its directors, as well as a description of the group's general activities and the location of these activities. According to 2011 government statistics, the most recent available, and information from CAIPO, there are approximately 20 religious groups registered in the country. As part of the visa process, foreign missionaries must apply to the Ministry of Labor for a work permit costing 500 East Caribbean dollars (ECD) ($185), along with an application fee of 100 ECD ($37); the permit must be renewed annually. To be approved, foreign missionaries must demonstrate prior experience, and a registered religious group must sponsor them.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, three different registration submissions have to be made (multi-registration).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for religious entities in terms of both their existential recognition and their legal registration apart from secular entities; revoke the multi-registration structure of the present system; to become Dynamic, a recognition agency needs to be established that is independent of government.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Guatemala, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Guatemala is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Guatemala is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Guatemala voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not explicitly mandate that religious groups register with it, the fact that a "basic religious activity" such as leasing property for conducting religious services is listed as contingent on registration makes the Guatemalan system pseudo-mandatory. Catholic religious groups are exempt from registration to receive benefits tied into registration. The registration process bestows legal entity status onto the group successfully registered. Non-Catholic religious groups must register with the Ministry of Interior to enter into contracts or receive tax- exempt status, after following a process involving several steps that could take up to two years and cost approximately 10,000 quetzals ($1,300). To register, a religious group must file with the Ministry of Interior a copy of its bylaws, evidence that it is a newly established legal entity that intends to pursue religious objectives, and a list of its initial membership with at least 25 members. The ministry may reject a registration application if it believes the group does not appear to be devoted to a religious objective, appears intent on undertaking illegal activities, or engages in activities that could threaten public order. Most applications are approved after a lengthy process. All religious groups must obtain the permission of the respective municipal authorities for construction and repair of properties and for holding public events, consistent with requirements for nonreligious endeavours. The law permits Mayan spiritual groups to conduct ceremonies at Mayan historical sites on government-owned property free of charge with written permission from the Ministry of Culture. Chaplain services are limited to Catholic chaplains and nondenominational (usually evangelical) Protestant chaplains. The law does not specify that access must be provided for prisoners of minority religious groups to spiritual counsellors from their faith. The government requires foreign missionaries to obtain tourist visas to enter the country; visas are renewable every three months. After renewing their tourist visas once, foreign missionaries may apply for temporary residence for up to two years; the residential permit is renewable.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements are not made available to all religious groups, broads grounds for the denial of registration, informational requirements are excessive (namely pursuit of "religious objectives" and requirement to list "initial membership"), membership quota is imposed, multi-registration, registration fee ($1,300) exceeds the amount of $100 stipulated in RoRB standards, state definition of religion, the ability to rent property for religious purposes is a "basic religious activity" that should not categorised as a benefit of registration.

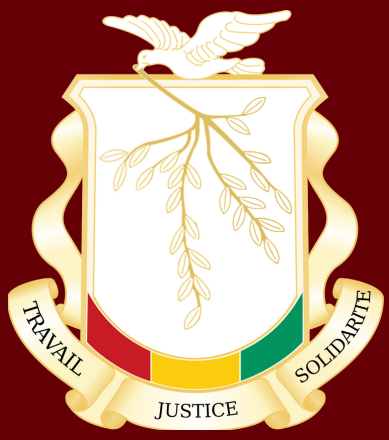
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Disestablish partial recognition by equalising and streamlining all recognition statuses including that of the Catholic Church; continue to ensure that politicisation of the recognition system does not take place; re-evaluate the rules surrounding mandatory registration for activities other than worship and proselytism; remove any instances of unstructure by clarifying in legislation areas that remain ambiguous or unaddressed; to become Dynamic, establish provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration; also, establish a recognition agency to manage the system independent of government.

Guinea, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Guinea is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Guinea is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Guinea did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities" – those activities that should be exempt from preapproval from the state or prior registration with the government. Existential recognition and legal registration are amalgamated by the description in legislation that a group becomes "officially recognised" upon completion of registration. The Secretariat General of Religious Affairs (SRA) handles registration and must approve all religious groups. Groups must provide a written constitution and application to the SRA along with their address and a fee of 250,000 Guinean francs ($29). The SRA then sends the documents to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation for final approval and signature. Once approved, the group becomes officially recognised. Every six months, each registered religious group must present a report of its activities to the government. Registering with the government entitles religious groups to an exemption from the value-added tax (VAT) on imported shipments and makes them eligible for select energy subsidies. Unregistered religious groups are not entitled to VAT exemptions and other benefits. By law, the government may shut down unregistered groups and expel their leaders. There is limited opportunity for legal appeal of these penalties. Religious groups are prohibited from owning radio or television stations.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, dual registration, imposing monitorial requirements every six months is impermissible to RoRB standards which stipulate that monitorial requirements should only be imposed on an annual basis, there is limited opportunity for legal appeal of penalties issued, the SRA retains control over sermon content, unregistration can lead to the forced closure of groups and the deportation of any foreign nationals involved in the group, especially foreign religious leaders, processing delays for registration applicants.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; religious may not own radio or television stations); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantle existent policies that restrict religious activity or place barriers during the registration process; establish sufficient provisions for existential recognition not just legal registration; revoke the rule of mandatory registration; use recognition to promote diversity and to improve religious education.

Guinea-Bissau, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Guinea-Bissau is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Guinea-Bissau is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Guinea-Bissau was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Guinea-Bissau did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that religious groups register with it via their obtainment of licences to conduct what RoRB describes as "basic religious activities". Although there is a formal process of mandatory registration, it is often not followed by the state itself and groups operate without registration. The Ministry of Justice handles registration of groups. *It is important to note that a state's irregular implementation of its mandatory registration policy does not negate the status of the country as automatically Restrictive in the SRR according to RoRB standards.* The process of obtaining licences involves providing the name, location, type, and size of the organisation to the Ministry of Justice. Under the law, religious groups are recognised as associations. The state temporarily suspended tax exemptions for NGOs and religious bodies for importing goods and products.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement of registration law, informational requirements requested could easily lead to the implementation of a membership quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; religious may not own radio or television stations); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition not just legal registration; establish a clear, authoritative system for religious recognition in order to reach the receptive classification; fix the unstructure present in the legislation by clarifying stances on topics not presently addressed; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency to manage the system independent of government.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Guyana, Co-operative Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Guyana is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Guyana is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Guyana did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: religious registration in Guyana is based on "indirect registration" – when registration procedures focus on registering places of worship than religious groups themselves. As such, there is no official procedure for the registration of religious groups outlined by the government. This type of registration policy creates a great deal of ambiguity as to whether a religious group may conduct other types of "basic religious activities" that do not involve a place of worship – such as proselytism – without prior registration with or notification of the government. The legislation suggests that all places of worship are mandated to register with the government. This registration process is described as resulting in "government recognition". This process is handled by the Deeds Registry and requires an organisation to submit a proposed name and address for the place of worship, as well as the names of executive group members or congregation leaders. Once formally recognised, a place of worship falls under legislation governing nonprofit organisations, allowing the organisation to conduct financial operations, buy property, and receive tax benefits in its name. Foreign religious workers require a visa from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Religious groups seeking to enter an Indigenous village for the purpose of proselytising must apply for and obtain permission from the village council. Application to a village council must include the name of the group, the names of its members who will be going to the village, their purpose, and the estimated date of arrival. Reportedly, however, village councils rarely enforce this requirement.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, indirect registration, unstructured registration procedures.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a distinct recognition system for different forms and levels of religion and belief; remove all forms of unstructured by clarifying unaddressed topics and issues; revoke the rule of mandatory registration of places of worship and disestablish the present system as being oriented on places of worship; to be classified as Dynamic, a recognition agency would need to be established the manage the recognition system in a way that is independent of the government to ensure no politicisation or manipulation takes place.

Haiti, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Haiti is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **unofficial state religion (Vodou)**; **theism affirmed in presidential and judicial oaths.**

Human rights instruments: Haiti is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Haiti voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the Bureau of Worship (BOW) handles the registration of religious organisations. The Bureau states that groups must register with it in order to receive certain benefits from the government and supports a "rigorous registration process". The stipulatory nature rather than the mandatory nature of these registration procedures is highlighted in the fact that there are no penalties for unregistration. Benefits for registered religious organisations may include tax-exempt status, exemption from import duties on church-related items, standing in legal disputes, and eligibility to receive public land to build schools. To obtain this status, a religious group must submit information on its leaders' qualifications, a membership directory, a list of the group's social projects, and annual activity reports to the BOW. Completion of the separate clergy registration process also confers certain benefits, namely legal authority to conduct civil ceremonies, such as marriages and baptisms, following an oath-taking ceremony organised by the Ministry of Justice. To obtain registered clergy status, the individual sponsored by a registered religious entity must submit approximately 10 documents. The required documentation package includes proof of completion for both secondary school and university or seminary-level religious studies, as well as a police certificate confirming no criminal record and no outstanding warrants. Foreign missionaries operating in the country are subject to the same legal and administrative requirements as their domestic counterparts. Malregistration – many religious leaders said the government's failure to maintain security and order in the face of increased gang violence hampered their communities' abilities to practise their religions freely.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements are not made available to all religious and belief groups active in the country, informational requirements are excessive (the necessity for a religious leader to submit a religious studies diploma, a membership directory).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hierocracy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system in the country that is dynamic enough to provide both existential recognition and legal registration to both traditional and non-traditional belief groups and at multiple levels of their activity; remove all instances of unstructure and the country should be able to be moved up to receptive status; to become Dynamic, the country would need to establish an independent recognition agency to manage with the recognition system and it would need to cater to both Christian and non-Christian groups simultaneously and equally.

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Honduras, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Honduras is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism and Evangelical Lutheranism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Honduras is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Honduras chose not to vote on the UDHR despite having the opportunity to.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not mandated to register to conduct what RoRB standards describe as "basic religious activities" but must register in order to conduct certain other activities or to receive some benefits from the state; registration is conducted with the Directorate of Regulation, Registration, and Monitoring of Civil Associations (DIRRSAC) within the Ministry of Governance, Justice, and Decentralisation. Religious groups may register under the religious designation 'religious association'. Applicant organisations must provide information on their internal organisation, bylaws, and goals. Approved organisations must submit annual financial and activity reports to the government to remain registered. They may apply to the Ministry of Finance to receive benefits, such as tax exemptions and customs duty waivers. Unregistered religious organisations do not receive tax-exempt status. The government requires foreign missionaries to obtain entry and residence permits and mandates that a local institution or individual must sponsor a missionary's application for residency and submit it to immigration authorities. The government has agreements with the Evangelical Fellowship of Honduras (CEH), Church of Jesus Christ, and Seventh-day Adventists, among others, to facilitate entry and residence permits for their missionaries. Groups with which the government does not have written agreement are required to provide proof of employment and income for their missionaries. While the government authorises clergy from all religious groups to conduct marriage ceremonies, by law it recognises only civil marriages conducted with a lawyer authorised to perform marriage ceremonies.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements are not made accessible to all religious groups.

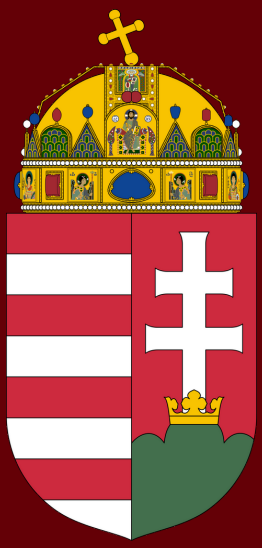
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition in addition to the already existent procedures for legal registration; ensure that these provisions are bestowed universally and equally across traditional and non-traditional belief systems as well as to NRMs, and at multiple levels of activity; remove any remaining minor restrictive policies within the recognition system; to become Dynamic, the Honduran government would need to allow for the establishment of a recognition agency to manage it recognition system and its activities independent of government involvement in order to ensure that freedom of religion or belief maintains its status of being ectopolitical.

Hungary



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Hungary is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Hungary is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Hungary did not vote on the UDHR; Hungary is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: vertical registration – the Hungarian government has established a four-tier system for religious group registration in the country, in descending order of the level of recognition bestowed, "established (or incorporated) churches," "registered churches" (also called "registered II"), "listed churches" (also called "registered I"), and "religious associations". All of the categories may receive income tax allocations from taxpayers and may have cooperation agreements with the state. However, the two highest categories are also eligible for state subsidies supplementing the income tax allocations, and religious groups in the highest tier may offer religious education classes in schools. The term "church" in the law refers to any religious community, not just Christian ones, and religious groups in any category may use "church" in their official names. All previously incorporated religious groups retained their status in the first tier of the system as established churches. Parliament must approve recognition of churches as established. The Budapest-Capital Regional Court has jurisdiction to rule on applications for registration within the other three categories. Religious entities that do not apply for legal status in one of the four tiers are still able to function and conduct worship but are not eligible to receive state funding or income tax contributions from taxpayers. The law states constitutional protection of freedom of religion also applies to unregistered groups. To qualify for established church status, a religious group must first have registered status and then conclude a comprehensive cooperation agreement with the state for the purpose of accomplishing community goals. The government submits the comprehensive agreement to parliament, which must approve it by a two-thirds majority vote. To qualify for registered church status, a religious group must have received tax allocations from an average of 4,000 persons per year in the five-year period prior to the application. This status also requires that the group either have operated as a religious association for at least 20 years in the country, or at least 100 years internationally, or have operated as a listed church for at least 15 years in the country or at least 100 years internationally. To qualify for listed church status, a religious group must receive tax allocations from an average of 1,000 persons per year in the three-year period prior to the application for status and have operated as a religious association for at least five years in the country or for at least 100 years internationally. To qualify for religious association status, a religious group must have at least 10 members. The law allows the government to negotiate individual cooperation agreements with all four tiers of religious groups for the performance of public service activities and support of faith-based activities. The agreements' duration depends on the status of the religious community, ranging from a five-year maximum for religious associations to 10 and 15 years for listed and registered churches, respectively, and unlimited duration for established churches. These agreements may be renewed. Religious groups that agree not to seek state (including personal income tax allocations) or EU funding for their religious activities may qualify as registered or listed churches without fulfilling the requirement regarding the number of personal income tax allocations. The applicant religious community must perform primarily religious activities and may not be a criminal defendant or have been convicted of a crime during the previous five years, under sanction for "repeated violation of accounting and management rules," or considered a national security threat. The court decides whether to grant status as a registered or listed church based on an examination of the criteria above. In reviewing these applications, the court may consult church law, church history, or ecclesiastical or academic experts, and may also seek the opinion of the national security services. According to the law, the Budapest-Capital Regional Court may dissolve a religious community with legal status with the exception of established churches if its activities conflict with the constitution or law or if the court rules its registration should have been denied. Parliament may dissolve an incorporated church if the Constitutional Court finds it is operating in violation of the constitution. According to the law, established, registered, and listed churches may perform pastoral services in prisons and hospitals. Other laws indicate religious associations may also have the right to provide services at these facilities.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements must be made accessible to all religious groups, limited agreements, longevity quota, mass deregistration in 2011, membership quota, onerous registration procedures for each legal category, parliamentary vote, reclassification, vertical registration system is instituted (verticalism).

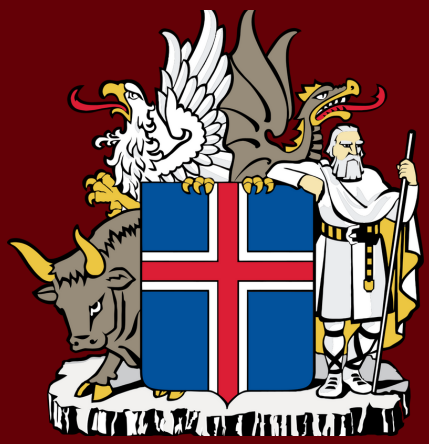
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition to be bestowed, not just legal registration; revoke the longevity quotas, mass deregistrations, membership quotas, reclassifications, parliamentary votes, vertical registration system, onerous registration procedures, and limited agreements; to become Dynamic, the Hungarian government would need to allow for the establishment of a recognition agency independent of its control that would be able to manage the recognition system without politicisation.

Iceland



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Lutheranism)**

Human rights instruments: Iceland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Iceland voted in favour of the UDHR; Iceland is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not required to register to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". Only registered groups are eligible for state funding and entitled to legal recognition of religious ceremonies, such as marriages, that they perform. Groups apply for recognition to the district commissioner's office that covers the administration of religion on a national level (currently the district commissioner of Northeast Iceland), which forwards the application to a four-member panel that by law the Minister of Justice appoints to review applications. The University of Iceland faculty of law nominates the chairman of the panel, and the university's Departments of Social and Human Sciences, Theology and Religious Studies, and History and Philosophy, respectively, nominate the other three members. The district commissioner then approves or rejects the application in accordance with the panel's decision. Applicants may appeal rejections to the Ministry of Justice, resubmitting their application to the district commissioner with additional information. The same four-member panel reviews appeals. To register, a religious group must "practice a creed or religion," and a life-stance organisation must operate in accordance with certain ethical values and "deal with ethics or epistemology in a prescribed manner." The law does not define "certain ethical values" or the prescribed manner in which groups must deal with ethics or epistemology. Religious groups and life-stance organisations must also "be well established," "be active and stable," "not have a purpose that violates the law or is prejudicial to good morals or public order," and have "a core group of members who participate in its operations, support the values of the organisation in compliance with the teachings it was founded on, and pay church taxes in accordance with the law on church taxes." The law does not define "well established" or "active and stable." According to the District Commissioner's Office of Northeast Iceland, any unregistered religious group or organisation may work in the same way as any company or association, provided it has, as the other organisations do, a social security number. Unregistered religious groups may, for example, open bank accounts and own real estate. All registered religious groups and life-stance organisations must submit an annual report to the relevant district commissioner's office (currently the district commissioner's Office of Northeast Iceland), describing the group's operations during the previous year. Registered religious groups and life- stance organisations are required to perform state-sanctioned functions, such as marriages and the official naming of children, and preside over other ceremonies, such as funerals.

Key restriction tools imposed: maturity quota and public position requirements, non-recognition for any denomination or religion other than the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland (ELC), stipulated qualifications are ambiguous and lend to state definitions of religion or belief, successful registration in Iceland is dependent upon approval by a panel of scholars effecting hinging registration on the opinions of a four-member panel (an example of religious consultation restriction tool), vertical recognition system due to the state privilege bestowed to the ELC which possesses legal benefits (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition agency that is independent of the government in its actions and activities; this would secure Iceland's classification as Dynamic; establish provisions for existential recognition; state religion can remain although no special privileges should be provided to the ELC if these same benefits are not also extended to all other groups.

India, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **India is a secular state**; **state privilege (Hinduism)**; **official minority status is granted to Buddhists, Christians, Jains, Muslims, Parsis, and Sikhs**; **theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: India is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; India voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that all religious groups register with it, it does state that religious groups receiving any kind of foreign funding must register in accordance with the Foreign Contribution of Regulation Act (FCRA). Registration uses a structure of licensing and is handled by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The federal government may also require that licensed organisations obtain prior permission before accepting or transferring foreign funds. The central government may reject a licence application or a request to transfer funds if it judges the recipient to be acting against "harmony between religious, racial, social, linguistic, or regional groups, castes, or communities." Federal law requires NGOs, including religious organisations, that are registered under the law to maintain audit reports on their accounts and a schedule of their activities and to provide these to state government officials upon request.

Recognition policy: the constitution states any legal reference to Hindus is to be construed to include followers of Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism, meaning they are subject to laws regarding Hindus, such as the Hindu Marriage Act. Subsequent legislation continues to use the word Hindu as a category that includes Sikhs, Buddhists, Baha'is, and Jains, but it identifies the groups as separate religions whose followers are included under the law. State governments may grant minority status under state law to religious groups that are minorities in a particular region. Members of recognised minority groups are eligible for government assistance programs. The constitution states that the government is responsible for protecting religious minorities and enabling them to preserve their culture and religious interests.

Key restriction tools imposed: broad grounds for the denial of registration leave this mechanism open to misuse against groups unfavoured by the state, misrecognition of Buddhists, Baha'is, Jains and Sikhs as Hindus or followers of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism as part of Hinduism and thereby subject to Hindu laws, monitorial requirements on an annual basis is permissible but not "on request" of the state government, restrictions were recently imposed on what NGOs (including religious groups) can claim as funds for administrative purposes, vertical recognition system is created with the "minority-community status" (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted in 10 of the 28 states); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration if donations originate from overseas); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition and reverse issues with misrecognition; dismantle all forms of vertical recognition; remove all restrictive policies on conversion and proselytism; broad grounds for the denial of registration to be misuse against groups unfavoured by the state need to be applied responsibly.

Indonesia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Indonesia is a secular state; official state ideology (Pancasila); state privilege (Sunni Islam); Buddhism, Catholicism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam and Protestantism are recognised by the state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Indonesia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Indonesia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: discriminatory-mandatory registration – all religious groups except those belonging to one of the six officially recognised religions (as long as they are established under a notary act and obtain approval from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights) must register. Registration involves a two-step process of obtaining a legal charter with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and registering with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). All religious organisations not belonging to one of the six officially recognised religions must obtain a legal charter under the secular designation civil society organisation (CSO) from MOHA (MORA is also involved in the decision to grant CSO status). The law requires all CSOs to uphold the national ideology of Pancasila, which encompasses the principles of belief in one God, justice, unity, democracy, and social justice; they are prohibited from committing blasphemous acts or spreading religious hatred. Registration requirements for religious organisations include the following conditions: organisations may not contradict Pancasila or the constitution; they must be voluntary, social, independent, nonprofit, and democratic; and they must have notarised articles of association (bylaws) and a specifically defined purpose. After MORA approval, the organisation is announced publicly through the state gazette. Violations of the law may result in a loss of legal status, dissolution of the organisation, and arrest of members under the blasphemy articles of the criminal code or other applicable laws. There also separate registration procedures for indigenous religious groups. Indigenous religious groups must register with the Ministry of Education and Culture as "aliran kepercayaan" to obtain official, legal status. The government requires all officially registered religious groups to comply with directives from MORA and other ministries on issues such as the construction of houses of worship, receipt of foreign aid by domestic religious institutions, and propagation of religion. A 2006 joint ministerial decree issued by MORA and MOHA states that religious groups may not hold services in private residences, and those seeking to build a house of worship are required to obtain the signatures of at least 90 members of the group and 60 persons of other religious groups in the community stating they support the construction. Local governments are responsible for implementing the decree, and local regulations, implementation, and enforcement vary widely. The decree also requires approval from the local interfaith council, called the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), before building can proceed.

Malregistration – the ongoing Papua conflict means that the central government may not have the ability to enforce registration laws at it prescribes in all its territory.

Key restriction tools imposed: deregistration can lead to arrest of group members, imposition of state definitions of religion, qualifications for registered status impose the state ideology of Pancasila and are also ambiguous which lends to their misuse against groups unfavoured by the state, religious consultation restriction tool is imposed by the fact that the Ministry of Religious Affairs must approve registration despite the fact that the Ministry of Home Affairs deals with registration procedures and the dispensation of legal charters, signature quota for places of worship, Ahmadi Muslims and members of the Fajar Nusantara Movement (commonly known as GAFATAR) are prohibited from proselytising, fatwas have been issued that ban proselytising other Islamic groups and one was published that discouraged spreading Shia Islam.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted and any materials considered anti-Muslim prohibited); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration if donations originate from overseas); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantle the misused recognition system and replace with one that is inclusive of all belief systems, both traditional and NRMs; halt government involvement in the internal affairs of religious organisations; revoke all policies that seek to restrict religious activity or the broader registration process.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Iran, Islamic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Twelver Ja'afari Shia Islam); recognised religious minorities are Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Iran is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Iran voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and non-registration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration and non-registration – the government mandates that all groups part of one of the recognised religious minorities register with it. As no other groups are legally valid to operate in the country, there are procedures for their registration. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) monitor religious activity. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) also monitors churches. Citizens who are members of one of the recognised religious minorities must register with authorities. Registration conveys certain rights, including the use of alcohol for religious purposes. Authorities may close a church and arrest its leaders if churchgoers do not register or if unregistered individuals attend services.

Recognition policy: the constitution states Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians are the only recognised religious minorities. “Within the limits of the law,” they have permission to perform religious rites and ceremonies and to form religious societies. They are also free to address personal affairs and religious education according to their own religious canon. The government considers any citizen who is not a registered member of one of these three groups or who cannot prove his or her family was Christian prior to 1979 to be Muslim.

Key restriction tools imposed: conversion to Christianity is not recognised in law (including non-registration and denial of rights granted to those born as Christians), mandatory self-registration if one is a member of one of the "recognised religious minorities", misrecognition of the Sabean-Mandaean community as Christians and Yarsanis as Shia Muslims, pseudo-recognition of "recognised religious minorities", unregistration will result in the forced closure of the religious building and the arrest of leaders if either members do not register or unregistered members attend services, vertical recognition system (verticalism), Muslim by default.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal to convert from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Shia materials prohibited); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; illegal for non-Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted and illegal in some forms); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present system established by the regime must first occur before any further recommendations can be made; reinstitution of the penal code to reflect principles of international human rights on matters of FoRB; abolish the vertical elements of the recognition system, pseudo-recognition of religious minorities, and misrecognition of unrecognised groups.

Iraq, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Iraq is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Iraq voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration and malregistration**

Registration policy: non-registration – outside Iraqi Kurdistan, there is no mechanism for new religious groups or groups not already recognised to receive existential recognition nor legal registration. The personal status law recognises the following religious groups as registered with the government: Muslims, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Assyrian Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholics, Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Catholics, Roman Catholics, National Protestants, Anglicans, Evangelical Protestant Assyrians, Seventh-day Adventists, Coptic Orthodox, Yezidis, Sabean-Mandeans, and Jews. Recognition allows groups to appoint legal representatives and perform legal transactions, such as buying and selling property. All recognised religious groups in the country, except for Yezidis, have their own personal-status courts responsible for handling marriage, divorce, and inheritance issues. There are three diwans (offices) responsible for administering matters for the recognised religious groups at the national level within the country: the Sunni Endowment Diwan, the Shia Endowment Diwan, and the Christian and Minorities Endowment Diwan. The three endowments operate under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office to disburse government funds to maintain and protect religious facilities.

Stipulatory registration - within Iraqi Kurdistan, religious groups can register with the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs (KRG MERA); the KRF MERA recognises Baha'i Faith, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sabean-Mandaeism, Yarsanism, and Yezidism. To register, a group must have a minimum of 150 adherents, provide documentation on the sources of its financial support, and demonstrate it is not "anti-Islam."

Malregistration – the ongoing ISIS insurgency means that the government may not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

National identity cards – National identity cards issued since 2016 do not denote the bearer's religion, although the online application still requests this information, and a data chip on the card still contains data on religion. The only religions that may be listed on the national identity card application are Christian, Sabean-Mandean, Yezidi, Jewish, and Muslim. There is neither a distinction between Shia and Sunni Muslims, nor a designation of specific Christian denominations. Individuals practicing other faiths may only receive identity cards if they self-identify as Muslim, Yezidi, Sabean-Mandean, Jewish, or Christian. Without an official identity card, one may not register a marriage, enroll children in public school, acquire passports, or obtain some government services. Passports do not specify religion.

Key restriction tools imposed: pseudo-recognition is extended to Christians and other minorities in that although they are recognised under personal status law they still cannot practice freely and certainly not to the full extent as prescribed in FoRB, vertical recognition system (verticalism); Iraqi Kurdistan has its own registration procedures and imposes both a membership quota onto registrant religious groups and value informational requirements such as presenting documentation showing the group is not "anti-Islam", eight religious communities receive pseudo-recognition, prohibition of the Baha'i Faith by Iraqi federal law.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal for a Muslim to convert to another religion); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted and any materials considered offensive to Muslim culture prohibited); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted, especially for practitioners of the Baha'i Faith due to it being a prohibited religion); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the abuse of recognition is essential to making any further headway to attaining genuine religious freedom in Iraq; this means halting the persecution of minorities, establishing a recognition system that has provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration and the disestablishment of Islam.

Ireland



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Ireland is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Ireland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Ireland did not vote on the UDHR; Ireland is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory and non-registration**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require religious groups to register to conduct basic religious activities but registering as a charity does provide groups with exemptions from tax. Non-registration – there are no formal mechanisms for the registration or recognition of religious groups. Religious groups may apply to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (the tax authority) as a charity to receive tax exemptions, and the groups must operate exclusively for charitable purposes, which under the law may include "the advancement of religion." The law requires all charitable organisations carrying out activities in the country to register with and provide certain information relating to their organisation to the Charities Regulator, a government-appointed independent authority. The regulator maintains a public register of charitable organisations and ensures their compliance with the law. Organisations must apply their income and property solely toward the promotion of their main charitable object, as set out in their governing instruments (such as a constitution, memorandum and articles of association, deed of trust, or rules). There is no category for the advancement of nonreligious philosophical beliefs.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, qualification that a religious group must provide "public benefit" are vulnerable to misuse against unfavoured groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that can provide both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously and at different levels of activity; to become Dynamic, established a recognition agency that is independent of government to manage the newly established recognition system.

87 Conditions of state RoRB

Israel, State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Israel is a secular state; state privilege (Judaism); Baha'i Faith, Christianity, Druze faith, Islam, and Judaism are the state-recognised religions.**

Human rights instruments: Israel is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Israel is not partied to the UNDRIP; Israel did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct activities classified by RoRB standards as "basic" and therefore reasonable to conduct without registration. The language of the legislation amalgamates existential recognition with that of legal registration. There are two pathways for registration of a religious group in Israel as adopted from the British Mandate period, each of which result in the same degree of recognition for the group. Laws inherited from the Ottoman Empire and British Mandate periods establish the legal authority of religious courts operated by officially recognised religious communities over their members in matters of marriage, divorce, and burial. The only domestic marriages with legal standing and that may be registered are those performed according to the religious statutes of recognised religious communities. The law allows for the civil registration of two persons as a married couple outside of the religious court system only if they married outside the country or if the partners are of different religions and their respective religious courts do not object to a civil registration, or if both partners are listed as "lacking religion" in the population registry. Marriages performed outside of the country may be registered with the MOI. A law mandating women's equality contains language that explicitly exempts matters of marriage, divorce, and appointments to religious positions. Membership in a recognised religion is recorded in the National Registry and generally passed from parents to children unless a person changes it through a formal conversion to another recognised religion. Religious identification is listed in the National Registry but not on official identity cards.

Key restriction tools imposed: non-recognition for Protestant groups and other minorities, secondary procedures are imposed as part of the registration process, vertical recognition is in place due to different religions and their communities being recognised under different laws from both the modern Israeli law to the Ottoman millet to the British Mandate era (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; individuals may only legally convert to one of the recognised religions); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that has sufficient provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously and at different levels of activity; remove existent abuses of the recognition system that have amounted to stagnation of recognition processes and overall caused violations of citizens' religious freedoms.

Italian Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Italy is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism)**

Human rights instruments: Italy is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Italy did not vote on the UDHR; Italy is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – the registration procedures in the Italian Republic are handled by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and have been identified as pseudo-mandatory meaning they are not explicitly stated as mandatory by the government but some basic religious activities are not fully exercisable by all groups without undergoing registration. It is important to note that legal registration is a prerequisite for a group to establish a bilateral cooperation agreement (called an accord) with the state. The law provides religious groups with tax-exempt status and the right to recognition as legal entities once they have completed the registration process with the MOI. Legal registration is a prerequisite for any group seeking an accord with the government. A religious group may apply for registration by submitting an official request to a prefect (the local MOI representative) that includes the group's statutes; a report on its goals and activities; information on its administrative offices; a three-year budget; certification of its credit status by a bank; and certification of the Italian citizenship or legal residency of its head. To be approved, a group's statutes must not conflict with the law. Once approved, the group must submit to MOI administrative monitoring, including oversight of its budget and internal organisation. The MOI may appoint a commissioner to administer the group if it identifies irregularities in its activities. Religious groups that are not registered may still operate legally as cultural associations and obtain tax-exempt status, legal recognition of marriages, access to hospitals and prisons, and other benefits, but those benefits are more easily obtained if a group has an accord with the government. The Catholic Church is the only legally recognised group exempted from MOI monitoring, in accordance with the concordat between the government and the Holy See. An accord also allows a religious group to receive funds collected by the state through a voluntary 0.8 percent of personal income tax set-aside on taxpayer returns. Taxpayers may specify to which eligible religious group they would like to direct these funds.

Key restriction tools imposed: informational requirements requested are excessive (namely mandating that the group's head must be an Italian national or have achieved local residency as well as credit status certification from a bank), it must be assured that bilateral cooperation agreements are made available to all religious groups, vertical recognition system is in place due to the state privilege extended to the Catholic Church.

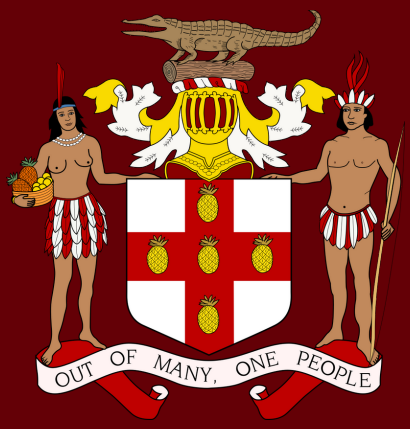
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition agency to manage religious recognition independent of government; revoke excessive informational requirements.

Jamaica



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Jamaica is a secular state; theism affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Jamaica is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Jamaica did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups need only register with the government if they seek to gain certain legal and financial benefits. The Jamaican registration system uses a process of incorporation; incorporated status is therefore equivalent legal entity status in other countries. The Companies Office of Jamaica, an executive agency, deals with this incorporation process. Religious groups need to incorporate to gain benefits, including the ability to hold land, enter into legal disputes as organisations, and allow their clergy to visit prisoners. The application comprises a standard form and a fee of 24,500 Jamaican dollars ($163). Nongovernmental organisations register through the same form and fee structure. Groups incorporated through this process must subsequently submit annual reports and financial statements to the Companies Office. Alternatively, religious groups may petition parliament to be incorporated by parliamentary act. Such groups receive similar benefits to those incorporating through the Companies Office, but parliament does not require annual reports or regulate the organisations it incorporates. Regardless of incorporation status, religious groups seeking tax-exempt status must register as charities. To be considered a charity, an organisation must apply either to the Department of Co-operatives and Friendly Societies, within the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries, or to the Companies Office. Once registered, groups also submit their registration to the Jamaica Customs Agency within the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service and apply to Tax Administration Jamaica to be considered for tax-free status. Foreign religious workers, regardless of affiliation, who visit the country to work with a religious organisation, must obtain a visa and a work permit from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, parliamentary acts are provided as an alternative procedure for registration and although benefits received as the same as the groups having undergone the main registration procedure the monitorial requirements are less stringent (parliamentarianism), registration fee of $1,600 significantly exceeds the RoRB standards threshold of $100, vertical registration system based on the fact that some groups are less monitored than others; prohibition of Obeah and Myalism is the principal reason for the country's classification as Censorious.

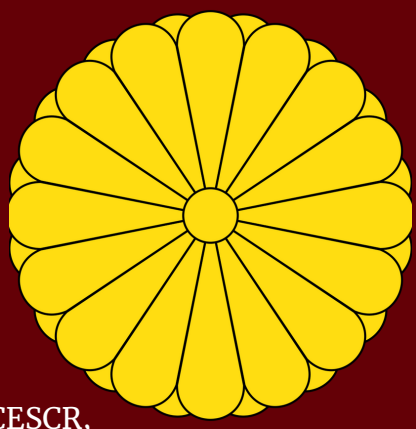
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free). However, the prohibition of the Obeah and Myalism religions means that the freedoms listed above do not apply to their members which undermines RoRB and FoRB conditions in Jamaica.

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that has sufficient provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously and at different levels of activity; reduce excessive registration fee and revoke vertical registration system.

Japan



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Japan is a secular state; state privilege (Shinto).**

Human rights instruments: Japan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Japan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups do not need to register with the government except if they wish to receive certain benefits. The government calls the registration process certification and the result is corporate status for religious or belief organisations, benefits of which include exemptions from paying income tax on donations and religious offerings used as part of their operational and maintenance expenses. Requirements for corporate status include a physical space for worship and that their primary purpose is disseminating religious teachings, conducting religious ceremonies, and educating and nurturing believers. An applicant must present, in writing, a three-year record of activities as a religious organisation, a list of members and religious teachers, the rules of the organisation, information about the method of making decisions on managing assets, statements of income and expenses for the past three years, and a list of assets. Registration is handled by each prefectural governor but there is an opportunity for national registration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) if the organisation has offices in multiple prefectures. After the MEXT Minister or a prefectural governor confirms an applicant meets the legal definition of a certified religious group with corporate status, the law requires the applicant to formulate administrative rules pertaining to its purpose, core personnel, and financial affairs. Applicants become religious corporations only after the MEXT Minister or governor approves their application and the applicants subsequently register. The law requires certified religious corporations to disclose their assets, income, and expenditures to the government. The law also authorises the government to investigate possible violations of regulations governing for-profit activities. Authorities have the right to suspend a religious corporation's for-profit activities for up to one year if the group violates the regulations. Under the "right of inquiry" provision of the Religious Corporation Act, the government may investigate religious corporations suspected of committing acts that are illegal or are deemed to clearly harm the public welfare. A court may order the dissolution of a religious corporation if the court finds they have committed such acts. After dissolution, the law does not hinder a religious group from continuing to practice its religion as a noncorporate entity.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, informational requirements are excessive (three year record of activities, list of members and leaders), longevity quota, prefecturalisation (as form of provincialisation), the stipulated qualification of a "physical space for worship" is narrow and could be misuse against unfavoured groups or those that do not necessarily engage in worship practices.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish procedures for existential recognition and for legal registration, particularly so that the latter process is made distinct from similar processes for secular entities; to become dynamic, establish an independent recognition agency to deal with religious recognition; Revoke the longevity quota, excessive informational requirements and the registration procedure of prefecturalisation.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Jordan, Hashemite Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); 11 Christian churches are granted lesser recognition by the state; theism is affirmed in the ministerial oath.**

Human rights instruments: Jordan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Jordan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: discriminatory mandatory registration – Islamic religious groups are granted recognition through the constitution and do not need to register with the government, however, this mandates that all non-Islamic religious groups register must register to operate legally. Registration and recognition are amalgamated in Jordan meaning that official recognition is the outcome of legal registration although this "official recognition" does not equate to the same degree of recognition bestowed to Islam and Islamic groups. There are two categories by which religious groups may be registered: as 'denominations' or 'religious entities'. 'Denominations' may administer rites such as marriage and establish ecclesiastical courts while 'religious entities' must work through ecclesiastical courts of recognised denominations on matters such as divorce and inheritance. The ability to own land, open bank accounts, and enter into contracts are benefits granted to both categories. Members of Christian churches recognised under the Law for Councils of Christian Denominations as well as members of denominations registered as religious entities, may take their denomination-issued marriage certificates to the Civil Status Bureau to receive their government marriage certificates. Recognised denominations and religious entities generally did not need government approval to accept funding from parent churches or certain Christian charities or organisations based outside of the country. Recognised non-Islamic religious groups are tax-exempt but do not receive the government subsidies granted to Islamic religious groups. Religious groups not recognised as denominations or religious entities lack legal status and may not undertake basic administrative tasks such as opening bank accounts, purchasing real estate, or hiring staff. Individuals may exercise such activities on behalf of the unrecognised group, however. To register as a recognised religious denomination, the group must submit its bylaws, a list of its members, its budget, and information regarding its religious doctrine to the Ministry of Interior and Prime Ministry. In determining whether to register or recognise Christian groups, the Prime Minister confers with the Ministry of Interior and the CCL. Although the practice is not explicitly mandated by law or the constitution, church and government leaders have stated that the CCL must endorse recognition for new Christian groups prior to the Prime Minister's approval. To achieve official recognition as denominations, Christian groups must be recommended by the Ministry of Interior and approved by the cabinet. The government also refers to the following criteria when considering recognition of Christian groups: the group's teachings must not contradict the nature of the constitution, public ethics, customs, or traditions; the Middle East Council of Churches, a regional body comprising four families of churches (Catholic, Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant/Evangelical), must recognise it; its religious doctrine must not be antagonistic to Islam as the state religion; and the group's membership must meet a minimum number of citizens, although a precise figure is not specified.

Key restriction tools imposed: endorsement from the Council of Church Leaders (CCL) is a *de facto* prerequisite to successful registration, excessive informational requirements and qualifications for registered status, Islamic groups are exemption from mandatory registration requirements, preapproval, state funding is reserved for Islamic groups, vertical recognition is in effect as there is the state religion of Islam and various recognised Christian groups (11 with their own ecclesiastical courts and 5 without) (verticalism); Jehovah's Witnesses continued to be denied official recognition.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; converts from Islam not recognised by the state); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; all non-Islamic forms illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantle the present restrictive system by removing all instances of partial and vertical recognition; establish procedures for equal existential recognition and legal registration for all groups; revoke the rule of mandatory registration for non-Islamic groups; utilise recognition as a means to promote diversity of belief as a positive component of society and to reaffirm the valid rights of minorities.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Kazakhstan, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Implicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Kazakhstan is a secular state; Greek Catholicism, Hanafi Sunni Islam, Judaism, Lutheranism, Roman Catholicism, and Russian Orthodox Church are recognised as the "traditional" religions of the country**.

Human rights instruments: Kazakhstan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Kazakhstan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates all religious groups to register with it before they conduct any activities in the country, even activities classified as "basic" by RoRB standards. The Committee for Religious Affairs (CRA) within the Ministry of Information and Social Development (MISD) is responsible for handling registration. Religious rights are limited to registered religious groups, especially those considered "traditional" to Kazakh society. A religious organisation may be designated "national," "regional," or "local." To register at the local level, an organisation must submit an application to the Ministry of Justice that lists the names and addresses of at least 50 founding members. Religious organisations may be active only within the geographic limits of the locality in which they register unless they have enough members to register at the regional or national level. Regional registration requires at least two local organisations, each located within a different province, and a combined membership of at least 500 persons. National registration requires at least 5,000 total members and at least 300 members in each of the country's 17 regions and the cities of Astana, Almaty, and Shymkent. Only groups registered at the national or regional level have the right to open educational institutions for training clergy. The law allows the government to deny registration to a religious group based on an insufficient number of adherents or on inconsistencies between the religious group's charter and any national law, as determined by an analysis conducted by the CRA. According to the administrative code, individuals participating in leading or financing an unregistered, suspended, or banned religious group may be fined between 126,250 tenge and 505,000 tenge ($270 and $1,100). The MISD drafts legislation and regulations, conducts analysis of religious materials, and makes decisions on censorship. Religious groups are required to submit religious materials for approval before dissemination. The counterterrorism law requires religious organisations to secure their buildings of worship against potential terrorist attacks; the government may act against religious organisations for failure to do so. The counterterrorism law requires religious organisations to secure their buildings of worship against potential terrorist attacks; the government may act against religious organisations for failure to do so. The law states the government shall not interfere with the choice of religious beliefs or affiliation of citizens or residents unless those beliefs are directed against the country's constitutional framework, sovereignty, or territorial integrity. The criminal and administrative codes include penalties for unauthorised religious activity, which includes the arrangement of, and participation in, activities of unregistered religious groups, participation in religious activities outside registered areas for religious services or areas approved by the government for specific religious events via the official pre-notification process, unlicensed distribution of religious materials or training of clergy, sale of religious literature without government approval or in places not approved by the government, and discussion of religion for the purpose of proselytisation without the required missionary registration. The law provides a notification system for religious organisations participating in activities outside houses of worship, which functions in practice as an approval system, as it requires specific locations and dates to be approved before religious activities can be conducted. The extremism law, which applies to religious groups and other organisations, accords the government discretion to identify and designate a group as an "extremist organisation," ban a designated group's activities, and criminalise membership in a banned organisation.

Key restriction tools imposed: broad grounds for the denial of registration makes unfavoured groups vulnerable to baseless denials, confinement, geographic quota, membership quota, registration procedures are split between national, regional and local levels (localisation and provincialisation), state definition of religion, vertical recognition is in effect with FoRB being limited to "traditional" religions, weaponisation of the term "traditional" to exclude religions unfavoured by the state.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantle the entire system that misuses recognition as a means to restrict religious activity; this dismantlement must take place before any further efforts can be made; revoke membership quota, broad grounds for the denial of registration, state definition of religion, term weaponisation, geographic quota, the policy of confinement among others.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Kenya, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Kenya is a secular state**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Kenya is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Kenya abstained from the UNDRIP; Kenya did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: discriminatory mandatory registration – all religious groups, their individual places of worship and affiliated faith-based organisations, except those belonging to indigenous or traditional religious groups, must register with the government to conduct "basic religious activities". Registrar of Societies handles these registration procedures which then reports to the Attorney General's Office. To register, applicants must have valid national identification documents, pay a fee, and undergo security screening. The government introduced a new requirement that applicants must hold a diploma or degree from a recognised theological institution to qualify for registration. Registered religious institutions and places of worship may apply for tax-exempt status, including exemption from duty on imported goods. The law also requires that organisations dedicated to advocacy, public benefit, the promotion of charity, or research register with the NGO Coordination Board. The law establishes fees for multiple steps in the marriage process that apply to all marriages, religious or secular. All officiants are required to purchase an annual licence, and all public marriage venues must be registered. Officiants must be appointed by a registered religious group to conduct marriages and to purchase the licence. The Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology must approve regional radio and television broadcast licences, including for religious organisations.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, indigenous and traditional groups are not required to register, informational requirements such as valid national identification documents imply that group registrants and leaders must be Kenyan nationals, registration fee is undisclosed, there have been no new registered religious groups since 2014 causing a backlog of thousands of applications.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Ensure that the recognition system is equalised; that no discrimination exists between new, indigenous and traditional religions; establish provisions for existential recognition and legal registration; establish a recognition agency independent of government; revoke the mandatory registration order.

Kiribati, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Kiribati is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Kiribati is partied to the UNCRC; Kiribati is not a signatory nor a party to the ICCPR, the ICESCR or the UNDRIP; Kiribati did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional registration – although the government does not mandate that all religious groups register to operate and to conduct basic religious activities, it does mandate that any group that exceeds the prescribed membership threshold must register with it. It remains unclear whether groups below this threshold are able to register (if not, this would be a violation of RoRB standards). There are no legal consequences for choosing to remain unregistered. To register, the religious organisation must submit a request to the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Social Affairs, signed by the head of the group and supported by five other members of the organisation. Also required in the request is information regarding proof of the number of adherents and the religious denomination and name under which the group wishes to be registered. The government allowed the Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC) to operate, but the church was not able to register during the year due to a court case and opposition to its registration from the Kiribati Uniting Church, according to KPC leadership. Church officials stated they were optimistic the government would approve registration due to the government's grant support for its activities. Two islands in the southern part of the country continued to uphold a "one- church-only" policy due to a stated deference to the first Protestant missionaries that visited the islands in the 1800s.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, informational requirements are excessive (including proof of number of adherents), membership quota (no less than 2%), signature quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for existential recognition and legal registration within a recognition system that caters to all groups and at different levels of activity as is described in the Dynamic level of the Spectrum of Religious Recognition; revoke the rule of mandatory registration for religious organisations and groups representing more than 2% of the population; the apathetic approach of the government means that some aspects of religious life are left vague in the legislation which may be the cause for some islands dominated by one group to violate religious freedoms (as reported by Freedom House).

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Conditions of state RoRB

Korea, Democratic People's Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **North Korea is a hypersecular state (state atheism); official state ideology (Juche, including Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism).**

Human rights instruments: North Korea is partied to the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; North Korea has attempted to revoke its ratification of the ICCPR; North Korea did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are currently no established procedures for the legal registration of religious or belief organisations. The government encourages all citizens to report anyone engaged in unauthorised religious activity or in possession of religious materials. The places of worship operating in the capital Pyongyang act as showpieces for foreigners rather than autonomously run religious organisations. The country's criminal code punishes a "person who, without authorisation, imports, makes, distributes, or illegally keeps drawings, photographs, books, video recordings, or electronic media that reflect decadent, carnal, or foul contents." The criminal code also bans engagement in "superstitious activities in exchange for money or goods." According to local sources, this prohibition includes fortune telling. According to the NGO Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (HRNK), under these two provisions, ownership of religious materials brought in from abroad is illegal and punishable by imprisonment and other forms of severe punishment, including execution.

Key restriction tools imposed: non-recognition for any religion and no procedures exist for the genuine registration of religious organisations, state ownership of religion, there are state-sanctioned religious organisations representing Buddhism, Catholicism, Cheondoism, Orthodox Christianity, and Protestantism which receive pseudo-recognition, token churches are constructed and run by the government, weaponisation of the term "superstitious".

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal); **hieroncy** (not free; all religious materials are illegal); **monasticism** (not free; highly restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; illegal); **pastoral services** (not free; highly restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; illegal); **receiving donations** (not free; illegal); **religious buildings** (not free; illegal); **religious instruction** (not free; illegal); **religious literature** (not free; illegal); **religious and worship services** (not free; state-sanctioned churches); **religious trade** (not free; illegal).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the country's repressive system for inhibiting all forms of religious activity would need to be conducted before any further recommendations could be made to improve the situation further; although North Korea is provided with the classification of Terminal in the Spectrum of Religious Recognition, the country should ideally be given its own even lower classification as no other country can compare to how North Korea violates freedom of religion or belief.

Korea, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **South Korea is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: South Korea is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; South Korea did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct "basic religious activities" as defined in RoRB standards. Access to registration is restricted to religious or belief organisations that have property valuing over 300 million won ($239,000). To qualify, organisations are required to present their internal regulations defining their purpose and activities, the meeting minutes of the group's first gathering, and a list of executives and employees. To obtain tax benefits, including exemption from acquisition or registration taxes when purchasing or selling property to be used for religious purposes, organisations must submit to the local government their registration as a religious and nonprofit corporate body, an application for local tax exemption, and a contract showing the acquisition or sale of property. All clergy are taxed on earned yearly income, but clergy are exempt from taxation on education, food, transportation, and childcare expenses. Individual laypersons are eligible for income tax deductions for contributions to religious organisations upon submission of receipts for the donations. The law provides government subsidies for the preservation and upkeep of historic cultural properties, including religious sites.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, financial quota, localisation of procedures and the necessity to own property to gain tax-exempt status.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Remove restrictive financial quotas and excessive informational requirements from the registration process as well as revoke the localisation of those procedures.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Kosovo, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Kosovo is a secular state; state privilege (Serbian Orthodox Church); Catholicism, Eastern Protestantism (called Evangelical Church), Islam (called Kosovo Islamic Community), Judaism (called Hebrew Belief Community), and the Serbian Orthodox Church are recognised in the religious freedom law.**

Human rights instruments: Kosovo is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Kosovo did not vote on the UDHR; Kosovo is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no procedures for legal registration provided by the government yet neither does the government require that religious groups register with it in order to conduct "basic religious activities" as identified in RoRB standards. The government does not provide a mechanism nor any specific guidance on how to obtain legal entity status through registration or other means. Without legal status, religious communities may not own property, open bank accounts, employ staff, or access the courts as a collective entity. Individual congregations or individuals, however, may do so and perform other administrative tasks in their own name. Local communities often recognise religious groups' possession of buildings; however, the law generally does not protect these buildings as property of a religious community, but rather as the private property of citizens or nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). SOC property is an exception; the law on special protective zones (SPZs) acknowledges and protects the integrity of SOC property ownership and stewardship over designated areas within the SPZs. The law stipulates the rights to establish humanitarian/charity organisations, accept voluntary financial contributions from individuals and institutions, and engage in national and international communication for religious purposes. The law on registering NGOs, however, does not apply to "religious communities, religious centers, or temples," which prevents religious groups from registering as NGOs and also prohibits NGOs from conducting religious activity in the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: barring unrecognised religious communities from obtaining legal registered status, indirect registration, vertical recognition system is in effect as some religious communities are recognised and others not (verticalism), weaponisation of the term "traditional".

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that in the country that has the capacity to both existentially recognise and legally register all religious and belief groups simultaneously and at multiple levels of activity (from belief systems, to denominations, to single religious buildings); tighten up or remove subjective language from the legislation that is vulnerable to misuse by authorities as a means of inhibiting religious activity, especially by non-traditional groups; revoke indirect registration, stop barring unrecognised religious communities from obtaining legal status, revoke the weaponisation of terms as well as the vertical nature of the recognition system.

Kuwait, State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution**; **only religious figures in Christianity and Judaism that are also recognised in Islamic orthodoxy are protected under anti-defamation and denigration laws.**

Human rights instruments: Kuwait is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Kuwait did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – the government does not provide any official mechanism for the registration of religious or belief organisations; however, indirect registration is offered to places of worship although the government does not provide guidance or support to groups seeking legal registration this way and there is no fixed criteria for an application to be approved. To obtain a licence to establish an official place of worship and gain benefits from the central government, a religious group must first receive approval for its place of worship from the local municipality. Both the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs (MAIA) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSA) have stated they are no longer responsible for registering non-Islamic places of worship, making registration procedures even more ambiguous. The government does not recognise any non-Abrahamic religions. A religious group with a licence to establish a place of worship may hire its own staff, sponsor visitors to the country, open bank accounts, and import texts for its congregation. Non-registered religious groups do not have the same rights as licensed groups and may not purchase property or sponsor workers and must rely on volunteers from within their community for resources. Some registered religious groups have agreed to assist non-registered groups in these matters. The law does not specifically prohibit proselytising by non-Muslims, but individuals proselytising may be prosecuted under laws criminalising contempt of religion. The law prohibits practices the government deems inconsistent with Islamic law, including anything the government deems to be "sorcery" or black magic, which under the penal code constitutes "fraud and deception" and carries a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment, a fine, or both. If a religious group wishes to purchase land, a citizen must be the primary buyer and must submit a request for approval to the local municipal council, which allocates land at its discretion. Citizens, or in a few cases the government, may also rent land to religious groups. An individual's religion is not included on passports or national identity documents except for birth and marriage certificates, on which it is mandatory. On birth certificates issued to Muslims, there is no distinction between Sunni and Shia. Members of non-Abrahamic faiths are not able to list their religion on their birth certificate and a dash (-) is denoted in place of their religion. The law prohibits the naturalisation of non-Muslims but allows male citizens of any religion to transmit citizenship to their descendants. Female citizens, regardless of religion, are unable to transmit nationality to their children.

Key restriction tools imposed: multi-registration is imposed for places of worship, pseudo-recognition is granted to eight Christian groups, state definition of religion, the government of Kuwait has a non-recognition policy for any non-Abrahamic religion or religions it views as non-Abrahamic, vertical recognition is in effect (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal for non-Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present system that inhibits the vast majority of religious activities; this process must take place first before Kuwait can be reclassified as Restrictive; revoke the vertical orientation of the recognition system and multi-registration.

99 Conditions of state RoRB

Kyrgyz Republic

2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Kyrgyzstan is a secular state; Russian Orthodoxy and Sunni Islam are recognised as traditional religions of the country.**

Human rights instruments: Kyrgyzstan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Kyrgyzstan is not partied to the UNDRIP nor did it vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups must register with the State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) before conducting any activities in the country. The law prohibits activity by unregistered religious groups, non-compliance with which is likely to lead to fines. Groups applying for registration must submit an application that includes an organisational charter, minutes of the organising meeting, and a list of founding members. Each congregation of a religious group must register separately and must have at least 200 resident founding citizens. Foreign religious organisations are required to renew their registrations with the SCRA annually. Although a 2016 Supreme Court decision nullified the requirement that religious groups register with local councils to establish new places of worship, in practice, the SCRA still maintains this requirement. The SCRA is legally authorised to deny the registration of a religious group if it does not comply with the law or is considered a threat to national security, social stability, interethnic and interdenominational harmony, public order, health, or morality. The SCRA may also deny or postpone the registration of a particular religious group if it deems the proposed activities of the group are not religious in character. Denied applicants may reapply at any time or may appeal to the courts. The law prohibits unregistered religious groups from actions such as renting space and holding religious services, including in private homes. Violations may result in an administrative fine of 7,500 som ($88) for individuals and 23,000 som ($268) for legal entities. After the SCRA approves a group's registration as a religious entity, the group must register with the Ministry of Justice to obtain status as a legal entity in order to own property, open bank accounts, and otherwise engage in contractual activities. The organisation must submit an application to the ministry that includes a group charter with an administrative structure and a list of board and founding members. By law, religious groups are designated as NGOs exempt from taxes on their religious activities. If a religious group engages in a commercial activity, it is required to pay taxes. The law gives the SCRA authority to ban a religious group in cases in which courts concur that a religious organisation has undermined the security of the state; undertaken actions aimed at forcibly changing the foundations of the constitutional system; created armed forces or propaganda advocating war or terrorism; engaged in the encroachment on the rights of citizens or obstruction of compulsory education of children; coerced members to remit their property to the religious group; or encouraged citizens to refuse to fulfil their civil obligations and break the law. The affected religious group may appeal the decision in the courts. According to the law, only individuals representing registered religious organisations may conduct missionary activity. If a foreign missionary represents an organisation approved by the SCRA, the individual must apply for a visa with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Visas are valid for up to one year, and a missionary is allowed to work three consecutive years in the country. All foreign religious entities, including missionaries, must operate within these restrictions and must reregister annually. The law provides for the right of registered religious groups to produce, import, export, and distribute religious literature and materials in accordance with established procedures, which may include examination by state experts. The law does not require government examination of religious materials (such as literature and other printed or audio or video materials), and it does not define the criteria for state religious experts. Authorities maintained bans on 21 "religiously oriented" groups they considered extremist and detained at least 39 members of one group for distributing banned religious material. The SCRA continued to refuse to register Jehovah's Witnesses congregations in the south of the country, based on a nullified provision of law that formerly required religious groups to register also with local councils, with the most recent denial coming in November. In May, the SCRA denied the importation of a religious text by Jehovah's Witnesses.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, annual reregistration is made mandatory for GFOs, broad grounds are given for the denial of registration which are likely to be misused against religious groups unfavoured by the state, dual registration, each new place of worship continue to have to register with a local council to operate legally despite the 2016 nullification of this law, informational requirements are excessive (namely a list of founding members) due to the likelihood of their misuse, localisation of registration procedures down to each congregation, membership and signature quotas, unregistration is prohibited, excessive authority is granted to the SCRA to ban religious groups it does not approve of.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to preapproval by the government); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the system to restrict religious activity and of the abusive system of registration that purely exists to stop groups the government does not approve of from congregating; revoke all identified restriction tools in the registration system.

100 Conditions of state RoRB

Lao People's Democratic Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Laos is a secular state; state privilege (Theravada Buddhism); official ideology (Marxism-Leninism); Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam are the only state-recognised religions.**

Human rights instruments: Laos is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Laos did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – Decree 315 mandates that all religious groups register with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) to conduct any activities legally in the country. Groups may, but are not required to, affiliate with one of the officially recognised religions. Religious groups must present information on elected or appointed religious leaders to national-, provincial-, district-, and village-level MOHA offices for review and certification. Religious groups operating in multiple provinces must obtain national MOHA approval; groups operating in multiple districts must obtain provincial-level approval; and groups operating in multiple villages are required to obtain district-level approval. If a group seeks to operate beyond its local congregation, it must obtain approval at the corresponding level. A religious activity occurring outside a religious group's property requires approval from village authorities. Activities in another village require approval from district authorities, from provincial authorities for activities in another district, and from national authorities for activities in another province. Religious groups must submit annual plans of all activities, including routine events, in advance for local authorities to review and approve. The decree states that nearly all aspects of religious practice – such as congregating, holding religious services, travel of religious officials, building houses of worship, modifying existing structures, and establishing new congregations in villages where none existed – require permission from a provincial, district-level, and/or central MOHA office. The MOHA may order the cessation of any religious activity or expression of beliefs not in agreement with policies, traditional customs, laws, or regulations within its jurisdiction. It may stop any religious activity it deems threatening to national stability, peace, and social order, causing serious damage to the environment, or affecting national solidarity or unity among tribes and religions, including threats to the lives, property, health, or reputations of others. The decree requires the MOHA to collect information and statistics on religious operations, cooperate with foreign countries and international organisations regarding religious activities, and report religious activities to the government. The decree states the government may sponsor Buddhist facilities, incorporate Buddhist rituals and ceremonies in state functions, and promote Buddhism as an element of the country's cultural and spiritual identity and as the predominant religion of the country. While sponsorship does not include government funding, it may include in-kind contributions or having high-level leaders join a Buddhist activity to help generate increased financial contributions from other sources. Per Decree 315, the building permit process for constructing houses of worship begins with an application to local authorities and then requires district, provincial, and ultimately central-level LFND and MOHA permission. All houses of worship must register under the law and conform to applicable regulations. Religious organisations must own 5,000 square meters (54,000 square feet, or 1.24 acres) of land to construct a place of worship. MOHA officials at all levels must approve plans for any maintenance, restoration, or construction activities at religious facilities in advance. Local authorities may provide input regarding the building, care, and maintenance of religious facilities, present their findings to their respective provincial governors and city mayors for consideration, and subsequently ask MOHA officials to review and approve activities conducted in religious facilities. The government controls the distribution of written materials for religious audiences. Decree 315 regulates the importation and printing of religious materials and production of books, documents, icons, and symbols of various religions. The Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism and MOHA must approve religious texts or other materials before they are imported. MOHA may require religious groups to certify the imported materials are truly representative of their respective religions, to address issues of authenticity, and to ensure imported materials comport with values and practices in the country. The law prohibits the import or export of unapproved printed or electronic religious materials.

Key restriction tools imposed: capacity quota, confinement, broad grounds for deregistration are likely to see their misuse against religious groups unfavoured by the state, excessive informational requirements regarding elected religious leaders, excessive monitorial requirements, mandatory registration of places of worship, preapproval, pseudo-recognition is also extended to Christianity, Islam and the Baha'i Faith who despite being recognised members continue to face undue restrictions violating FoRB, separate excessive monitorial requirements are imposed onto places of worship, vertical recognition is in effect (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to preapproval by the government); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present system that abuses recognition and registration to censor the religious aspects of the lives of citizens and the internal affairs of religious organisations; the current provisions for existential recognition are appreciated but should not be misused to exclude non-recognised religions; existential recognition should be extended to all belief systems; revoke the restriction tools identified in the registration system.

101 Conditions of state RoRB

Latvia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Latvia is a secular state; the state recognises Baptists, Catholics, Latvian Orthodox Christians, Lutherans, Methodists, Old Believers, and Seventh-day Adventists as "traditional" religious groups; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Latvia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Latvia did not vote on the UDHR; Latvia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it, conducting pastoral services and hosting worship services in public are considered "basic religious activities" so subjecting them to registration makes the registration policy pseudo-mandatory. During 2022, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) requested the termination of activities of 17 religious organisations for failure to submit required reports on their activities; one organisation appealed. Benefits of registering include legal status to own property and conduct financial transactions, eligibility to apply for funds for religious building restoration, and tax deductions for donors. Registration also allows religious groups to perform religious activities in hospitals, prisons, and military units and to hold services in public places such as parks or public squares, with the agreement of the local government. Unregistered groups do not possess legal status and may not own property in the name of the group, although individual members may hold property that the group uses for religious purposes. Unregistered groups may not conduct financial transactions or receive tax-free donations. They may not perform religious activities in hospitals, prisons, or military units and generally may not hold worship services in public places without special permission. The law stipulates fines ranging from €40 to €200 ($43to $220) if an unregistered group carries out any of these activities. By law, to register as a congregation, a religious group must have at least 20 members who are 18 or older. Individuals with temporary residency status, such as asylum seekers and foreign diplomatic staff, may count as members for the purpose of registration only during the authorised period of their residency permits. To apply, religious groups must submit charters explaining their objectives and activities; a list of all group members (full name, identification number, and signature); the names of the persons who will represent the religious organisation; minutes of the meeting founding the group; confirmation that members voted on and approved the statutes; and a list of members of the audit committee (full name, identification number, and title). The audit committee is responsible for preparing financial reports on the group and ensuring it adheres to its statutes. The MOJ determines whether to register a religious group as a congregation. The ministry may deny an application if it deems registration would threaten human rights, the democratic structure of the state, public safety, welfare, or morals. Groups denied registration may appeal the decision in court. Ten or more congregations with a total of at least 200 members of the same faith or denomination, each with permanent registration status, may form a religious association or church. Groups with religious association status or status as a private society or foundation may establish theological schools and monasteries. The law does not permit simultaneous registration of more than one religious association of a single faith or denomination or of more than one religious group with the same or similar name. According to the law, all traditional and registered religious organisations are required to submit an annual report to the MOJ by March 1 regarding their activities and goals. They must also provide other data, including congregation size, number of clergy, number of weddings and other ceremonies performed, and details of group governance and financial status. The law states that the activities of a religious organisation may be terminated on the basis of a court ruling if the group acts in conflict with the constitution and other regulatory laws. Activities may also be terminated if a religious organisation calls on others to disobey the law or if its activities endanger the democratic state system, public peace and order, or the health and morals of others. On March 24, parliament amended the Law on Religious Organisations to provide that the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia may terminate the activities of a religious organisation if it cannot be reached at its legal address, does not submit the report on its activities as required by law, or fails to ensure the right of representation for the management bodies of the organisation.

Recognition policy: the "traditional" religious groups recognised in law are given rights and privileges not given to other religious groups including the right to teach religion courses in public schools and the right to officiate at marriages without obtaining a civil marriage licence from the MOJ. These eight groups are also the only religious groups represented on the government's Ecclesiastical Council, an advisory body established by law and chaired by the Prime Minister that meets on an ad hoc basis to comment and provide recommendations on religious issues although their recommendations do not carry the force of law. The law also accords the rights and privileges that are tied into registration to the eight traditional religious groups without them having to undergo registration.

Key restriction tools imposed: broad grounds for the denial of registration could easily be misused against religious groups the government does not favour, informational requirements are excessive (namely stipulating a list of all group members and their personal details among other excessive requirements), membership quota, nominal restriction, the establishment of pastoral services and marriage officiation as registration benefits makes registration procedures pseudo-mandatory, vertical recognition is in effect as some "traditional religions" are recognised while others are not (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Re-establish the recognition system so that it is inclusive of all belief systems; revoke all restriction tools within the system identified in the above analysis; to become Dynamic, the government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system, after which it would relinquish its control to ensure the autonomy of the agency.

Lebanese Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Lebanon is a secular state; 5 Muslim denominations, 12 Christians denominations and Judaism are recognised by the state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Lebanon is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Lebanon voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: discriminatory registration – there are no formal procedures for legal registration in the country that are prescribed and outlined by the government although the government mandates registration for Protestant groups with the Evangelical Synod. Registration is referred to as official recognition. To do so, a religious group must submit a statement of its doctrine and moral principles to the cabinet, which evaluates whether the group's principles are in accordance with the government's perception of popular values and the constitution. Alternatively, an unrecognised religious group may apply for recognition by seeking affiliation with another recognised religious group. In doing so, the unrecognised group does not gain recognition as a separate group but becomes an affiliate of the group through which it applies. This process has the same requirements as applying for recognition directly with the government. There are 18 officially recognised religious groups which are noticeably all Abrahamic. Official recognition of a religious group allows baptisms and marriages performed by the group to receive government recognition, which also conveys other benefits, such as tax-exempt status and the right to apply the religious group's codes to personal status matters. By law, the government permits recognised religious groups to administer their own rules on family and personal status issues, including marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. Shia, Sunni, Druze, and recognised Christian groups have state-appointed, government- subsidised sectarian courts to administer family and personal status law according to the respective religious group's beliefs. While the religious courts and religious laws are legally bound to comply with the provisions of the constitution, the Court of Cassation (the highest civil court in the judicial system) has very limited oversight of religious court proceedings and decisions. Unrecognised religious groups may own property, assemble for worship, and perform religious rites freely. They may not perform legally recognised marriage or divorce proceedings, and they have no standing to determine inheritance issues. Due to agreements in the country's confessional system that designate percentages of senior government positions (and in some cases, specific positions) for the recognised religious confessions, members of unrecognised groups have no opportunity to occupy certain government positions, including cabinet, parliamentary, secretary-general, and director general positions. Some members of unregistered religious groups, such as Baha'is, and unrecognised Protestant faiths, continued to list themselves as belonging to recognised religious groups to ensure their marriage and other personal status documents remained legally valid. By law, an individual is free to convert to a different religion if a local senior official of the religious group the person wishes to join approves the change. The religious group issues a document confirming the convert's new religion, allowing the convert to register her or his new religion with the Ministry of Interior's (MOI's) Personal Status Directorate. The new religion is included thereafter on government-issued civil registration documents. Citizens have the right to remove the customary notation of their religion from government-issued civil registration documents or change how it is listed. Changing these documents does not require approval of religious officials and does not change or remove the individual's registration with the Personal Status Directorate.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation in favour recognition rather than legal registration as is the general form of amalgamation, informational requirements set out for recognition procedures are ambiguous and vulnerable to misuse against groups unfavoured by the state, there are several religious groups that the government does not or has refused to recognise; the issue of quasi-registration is ongoing.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (free; a broad interpretation of the prohibition on "items offensive to Muslim culture" could see non-Islamic religious materials being prohibited); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to recognition); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free; however, could be subject to prohibition if challenged by one of the recognised religious groups); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Re-establish the recognition system so that it is becomes inclusive of all belief systems and is able to recognise in a multi-level capacity; revoke all the main restriction tools identified.

Lesotho, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Lesotho is a secular state**; **state privilege (Christianity)**; **theism is affirmed in the monarchical oath and oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Lesotho is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Lesotho did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct what RoRB standards describe as "basic religious activities" that should not require prior registration to be conducted. By law, any group, religious or otherwise, may register as a legal entity with the government, providing the entity has a constitution and a leadership committee. Most religious groups register, but there is no penalty for those that do not. Registration gives a group legal standing, formalises its structure under the law, and provides exemption from income tax. In the absence of registration, religious organisations may operate freely, but without legal standing or any of the protections of registered organisations. The law requires religious marriages to be performed by members of the clergy, leaving adherents of religious traditions without a clergy, such as Baha'is, with civil marriage as their only option.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, restricting access to non-Christian groups broadcasting as a means of propagation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency independent of government that acts to manage the established recognition system, to ensure its inclusivity, and to encourage the diversity of belief.

Liberia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Liberia is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution and in oaths of office for high-level government officials.**

Human rights instruments: Liberia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Liberia voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: discriminatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups register with it except for indigenous religious groups. The constitution claims that no religious group shall have exclusive privileges or preferences and that the country shall establish no state religion. Religious groups are required to submit their articles of incorporation and their organisations' statements of purpose to Local religious organisations register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and pay a one-time fee of 7,500 Liberian dollars (L$) ($49) to file their articles of incorporation and an annual fee of L$3,500 ($23) for registration. Foreign religious organisations pay L$78,000 ($508) for registration annually and a one-time fee of L$96,000 ($625) to file their articles of incorporation. Religious organisations also pay L$1,500 to L$2,000 ($10 to $13) to notarise articles of incorporation to be filed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an additional L$1,500 ($10) to receive a registered copy of the articles. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning issues proof of accreditation for the articles of incorporation. There is also an option of completing the same process at the Liberia Business Registry. Some religious organisations are able to register at the business entity level, in compliance with a government regulation issued four years ago. Previously they reported being charged annual registration fees for each of their individual locations throughout the country, leading to cumulative large total registration fees. Registered religious organisations, including missionary programs, religious charities, and religious groups, receive income tax exemptions and duty-free privileges on goods brought into the country, privileges not afforded to unregistered groups. Registered groups may be sued as a single entity separately from any lawsuits brought against individual owners.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, imposition of a fee system for different kinds of religious organisations (local, foreign, "local and foreign") some of which exceed RoRB threshold, multiple charges of registration fee such as being charged for individual locations.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish distinct procedures for existential recognition and legal registration and at multiple levels of activity; reduce financial requirements for registration to more appropriate prices in line with RoRB standards; to become Dynamic, the government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage the religious recognition system and then relinquish its control over the agency in order to ensure its independence from government involvement.

Libya, State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); Christians and Jews are recognised by the state as religious minorities; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Libya is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Libya did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no mechanisms outlined by the government for the registration of non-Islamic religious groups as all non-Islamic groups are either restricted or prohibited. The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (MEIA) administers mosques, supervises clerics, and has primary responsibility for ensuring all Islamic religious practices conform to state-approved Islamic norms. There is no law providing for individuals' right to choose or change their religion or to study, discuss, or promulgate their religious beliefs. There is no civil law explicitly prohibiting conversion from Islam to another religion or prohibiting proselytising; however, the criminal code effectively prohibits missionary activities or conversion, according to scholars and human rights advocates. It includes prohibitions against "instigating division" and insulting Islam or the Prophet Muhammad, charges that carry a maximum sentence of death. The criminal code prohibits the circulation of publications that aim to "change the fundamental principles of the constitution or the fundamental rules of the social structure," which authorities use to criminalise the circulation of non-Islamic religious materials and speech considered "offensive to Muslims."

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, Islamic practice is constricted to state-approved norms.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic materials either entirely prohibited or heavily restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; illegal); **religious literature** (not free; illegal); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the current apparatus for terminally restricting religious activity is essential before for improvements can be made to Libya's approach to religious freedom; dismantlement entails the fundamental reshaping of the government and whole society's approach to religion and belief in accepting one fundamental principle, that human beings have the valid right to choose and change their belief identity, to have no none, or to be open to exploring different belief systems.

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Liechtenstein, Principality of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Catholicism); state privilege (Protestant Reformed Church, Reformed-Lutheran Church); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Liechtenstein is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Liechtenstein did not vote on the UDHR; Liechtenstein is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct what RoRB standards describe as "basic religious activities". The government's proposed constitutional amendment to grant complete equality of religions and to formally separate church and state remained pending at year's end. Religious groups other than the Catholic Church may organise themselves as associations, which the commercial registry administers and which gives associations the rights of a legal entities, such as owning property and entering into contracts. Religious groups other than the Catholic Church must register to receive government funding for activities such as providing religious education in schools or offering language courses for foreigners. To register in the commercial registry, as an association, a religious group must follow the same procedures as a non-religious group: it must submit an official letter of application to the Office for Justice within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Justice that includes the organisation's name, purpose, board members, and head office location, as well as a memorandum of association based on local law, a trademark certification, and a copy of the organisation's statutes. All religious groups registered on the commercial registry are exempt from certain taxes. To receive residency permits, foreign religious workers must have completed theological studies, command a basic level of German, belong to a "nationally known" religious group (the law does not define "nationally known"), and be sponsored by a resident clergy member of the same religious group.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, non-recognition for any non-Catholic religion or denomination, some informational requirements (such as a memorandum of association based on local law and a trademark certification) are excessive, restrictions and requirements of foreign missionaries are impermissible.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish procedures for religious registration distinct from those established to register secular entities; establish a recognition system that has the capacity to both existentially recognise and legally register religious entities at multiple levels of activity; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to manage the newly established recognition system and works to promote and sustain religious and belief freedom through spreading the message that diversity of belief identity is positive.

Lithuania, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Lithuania is a secular state; Evangelical Lutherans, Evangelical Reformed, Greek Catholics, Jews, Karaite Jews, Old Believers, Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox Christians, and Sunni Muslims are recognised as "traditional" religious groups; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Lithuania is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Lithuania did not vote on the UDHR; Lithuania is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct "basic religious activities" as outlined in RoRB standards. The law defines religious groups as religious communities; religious associations, which comprise at least two religious communities under common leadership; and religious centers, which are higher governing bodies of religious associations. Religious groups may apply to the government for state registration, state recognition, or both. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) handles official registration of religious communities, associations, and centres. Groups wishing to register must submit an application and supporting documentation to the ministry, including bylaws describing their religious teachings and governance, minutes of the founding meeting, and a list of the founders, at least 15 of whom must be citizens. Upon approval of its application, a religious community, association, or centre may register as a legal entity with the State Enterprise Centre of Registers. Registration is voluntary for religious communities, associations, and centers affiliated with traditional religious groups and mandatory for nontraditional communities wishing to receive legal status. Registration of traditional religious communities, associations, and centers is free of charge, while nontraditional communities pay a fee of €32 ($34). Traditional communities also have a simpler registration procedure and need to submit only an application, decisions of their governing body on the appointment of their leader, and their headquarters address. The MOJ may refuse to register a religious group if full data are not included in the application, the activities of the group violate human rights or public order, or a group with the same name has already registered. According to the Ministry of Justice, there are 1,129 traditional and 198 nontraditional religious communities, associations, and centers that are officially registered legal entities. The law recognises as traditional those religious groups able to trace back their presence in the country at least 300 years. The law lists nine traditional religious groups: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, Russian Orthodox, Old Believer, Jewish, Sunni Muslim, and Karaite Jewish. Traditional religious groups may perform marriages that are state recognised, establish joint private/public schools, provide religious instruction in public schools, and receive annual government subsidies. Their highest-ranking leaders are eligible to apply for diplomatic passports, and they may provide chaplains for the military, social care institutions, hospitals, and prisons. The state provides social security and healthcare insurance contributions for clergy, religious workers, and members of monastic orders of the traditional religious groups. Traditional religious groups are also not required to pay social and health-insurance taxes for clergy and most other religious workers and members of monastic orders. Other religious groups and associations may apply to the MOJ for state recognition if they have legal entity status, meaning they have been officially registered in the country for at least 25 years. The Seimas votes on whether to grant state recognition status upon recommendation from the ministry. The Evangelical Baptist Union of Lithuania, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pentecostal Evangelical Belief Christian Union, and New Apostolic Church of Lithuania are the only state-recognised nontraditional religious groups registered in this manner. For all religious groups, official registration is a prerequisite for opening a bank account, owning property, and acting in a legal or official capacity as a community. The law allows all registered religious groups to own property for use as prayer houses, homes, and other functions, and it permits construction of facilities necessary for religious activities. All registered groups are eligible for public funds from municipalities for cultural and social projects. Unregistered communities have no legal status, but the constitution allows them to conduct worship services and seek new members. The government uses the term "confession" to refer to one or more traditional religious communities, grouped under a single faith. The government allocates funds to each of nine confessions for refurbishing houses of prayer, restoring old cemeteries, and preserving cultural heritage sites. Each of the nine confessions receives €3,075 ($3,300) every year as a base fund, plus an additional amount that is calibrated according to the number of adherents in each community.

Recognition policy: the government discriminates between "traditional" and "non-traditional" religious groups by providing more benefits to the former than the latter. The constitution upholds that the status of religious groups shall be established by agreement or law and recognised religious groups shall be free to carry out their activities, as long as they are not in conflict with the constitution or laws. Recognition entitles nontraditional religious groups to perform marriages that will be recognised by the state in the same manner as marriages officiated by traditional religious groups, and to provide religious instruction in public schools. Recognition also grants nontraditional religious groups eligibility for annual subsidies from the state budget and for certain social security and healthcare contributions by the state, and the right to broadcast religious services on national radio.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad grounds are provided for the denial of registration, dual registration, membership quota, longevity quotas, misuse of the dichotomic terms "traditional" and "non-traditional" to create a vertical recognition system (verticalism), nominal restriction, parliamentary vote (parliamentarianism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present restrictive recognition system involving the revocation of the restriction tools identified.

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Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Luxembourg is a secular state; recognised religions include Anglicanism, Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, and Protestantism.**

Human rights instruments: Luxembourg is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Luxembourg voted in favour of the UDHR; Luxembourg is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no formal registration mechanisms for religious or belief organisations prescribed by the government. While the constitution provides for the right to assemble peacefully without prior authorisation, it stipulates open-air religious or other meetings are subject to laws and police regulations. The constitution prohibits compulsory participation in or attendance at church services or observance of religious days of rest and stipulates that a civil marriage ceremony must precede a religious marriage ceremony for the state to recognise it. The constitution provides for the regulation of relations between religious groups and the state, including the role of the state in appointing and dismissing religious clergy and the publication of documents by religious groups, through conventions between the state and individual religious groups. These conventions are subject to parliamentary review. Religious groups are free to operate in the form they wish, with many choosing to operate as nonprofit associations. The government has formally approved conventions with six religious groups, which it supports financially with a fixed amount that is adjusted yearly for inflation. The six groups receive funds partly based on the number of their adherents in 2016; other funding is a direct contribution fixed under a revised law adopted in 2016. The six groups are the Roman Catholic Church; the Greek, Russian, Romanian, and Serbian Orthodox Churches as one community; the Anglican Church; the Reformed Protestant Church of Luxembourg and the Protestant Church of Luxembourg as one community; the Jewish community; and the Muslim community. To qualify for a convention with the state, a religious community must be a recognised world religion and have established an official and stable representative body with which the government can interact. Groups without signed conventions, such as the New Apostolic Church, operate freely but do not receive state funding. The Baha'i Faith does not have a convention with the state but has a foundation that allows it to receive tax- deductible donations. Religious groups must submit their accounts and the report of an auditor to the government for review to verify they have spent government funds in accordance with laws and regulations. The government may cancel funding to a religious community if it determines the community is not upholding any of the three mutually agreed principles of respect for human rights, national law, and public order stipulated in the conventions.

Key restriction tools imposed: grounds for the revocation of a bilateral cooperation agreement are broad and vulnerable to misuse, qualifications for establishing a bilateral cooperation agreement such as the group must be a "recognised world religion" are ambiguous and exclude new religious movements, unstructure is a problem which is epitomised by the lack of registration procedures.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantle the misuse of existential recognition to exclude non-recognised groups; revoke subjective legislation; minor issues within the system persist that require resolutions; to become Dynamic, the government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the recognition system and also take over the responsibility of funding groups; the government would need to relinquish its control over the recognition agency to ensure its independence.

Madagascar, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Madagascar is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Madagascar is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Madagascar did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of the Interior by law. By registering, a religious group attains the legal status necessary to receive direct bequests and other donations. Once registered, the group may apply for a tax exemption each time it receives a donation, including from abroad. Registered religious groups also have the right to acquire land from individuals to build places of worship; however, the law states landowners should first cede the land back to the state, after which the state will then transfer it to the religious group. To qualify for registration, a group must have at least 100 members and an elected administrative council of no more than nine members, all of whom must be citizens. Groups failing to meet registration requirements may instead register as "simple associations." Simple associations may not receive tax-free donations but may hold religious services as well as conduct various types of community and social projects. Associations engaging in dangerous or destabilising activities may be disbanded or have their registration withdrawn. Simple associations must apply for a tax exemption each time they receive a donation from abroad. If an association has foreign leadership and/or members of the board, it may form an association "reputed to be foreign." An association is reputed to be foreign only if the leader or members of the board include foreign nationals. Such foreign associations may only obtain temporary authorisations, subject to periodic renewal and other conditions. The law does not prohibit national associations from having foreign nationals as members. The government requires a permit for all public demonstrations, including religious events such as outdoor worship services.

Key restriction tools imposed: all leaders of a registrant religious group must be Madagascan citizens to succeed in applying through the main registration procedure as a religious group, amalgamation of recognition and registration procedures in favour of legal registration, broad grounds for deregistration are likely to be misused to the detriment of groups unfavoured by the state, GFOs are given separate registration procedures and only "temporary authorisations" to operate in the country, membership quota of 100. Muslims born in the country continued to report that despite generations of residence, some members of their community were unable to acquire citizenship. Muslim leaders again reported that some Muslims continued to encounter difficulty obtaining official documents and services from government offices because of their non-Malagasy-sounding names.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition; revoke existent restrictive policies in the recognition system and remove all forms of discrimination in registration process as well as all restriction tools identified; to be classified Dynamic, the government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage its recognition system; following its establishment and the appointment of a board of directors, the government would need to relinquish its involvement in the agency.

Malawi, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Malawi is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Malawi is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Malawi did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate religious groups register with it, the fact that registration is a necessary prerequisite for a religious group to rent property (a "basic religious activity") under its own name in the country makes the registration procedures in Malawi pseudo-mandatory. According to the government, registration does not constitute endorsement of religious beliefs, nor is it a prerequisite for religious activities. Registration achieves recognised of religious groups as "legal entities". To register, groups must submit documentation detailing the structure and mission of their organisation and pay a fee of 1,000 kwacha ($1). The government reviews the application for administrative compliance only. According to the government, registration does not constitute endorsement of religious beliefs, nor is it a prerequisite for religious activities. Registration allows a religious group to acquire land, rent property in its own name, and obtain utility services such as water and electricity. The law authorises religious groups, regardless of registration status, to import certain goods duty free. These include items for religious use, vehicles used for worship-related purposes, and office equipment. In practice, however, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs rarely grants duty exemptions. Detainees have a right to consult with a religious counsellor of their choice. Foreign missionaries are required to have employment permits.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation of recognition and registration procedures in favour of legal registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; renting property is subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition and fix instances of unstructure within the present system; to be classified Dynamic, the government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage its recognition system; following its establishment and the appointment of a board of directors, the government would need to relinquish its involvement in the agency.

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Malaysia



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam)**

Human rights instruments: Malaysia is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Malaysia is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Malaysia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there is no distinct mechanism for the legal registration of non-Islamic religious groups as religious or belief organisations except to register under the same legal category as charities under the secular designation 'nonprofit charitable organisations'. The Registrar of Societies (ROS) deals with registration procedures. Groups must submit paperwork showing the organisation's leadership, purpose, and rules, and by paying a small fee. These organisations are legally required to submit annual reports to the ROS to remain registered. The ROS may inspect registered organisations and investigate those suspected of being used for purposes "prejudicial to public peace, welfare, good order, or morality." Tax laws allow an exemption for registered religious groups for donations received and a tax deduction for individual donors. Donors giving zakat (Islamic tithes) to Muslim religious organisations receive a tax rebate. Donors to government-approved charitable organisations (including some non-Muslim religious groups) may receive a tax deduction on the contribution rather than a tax rebate. The law forbids proselytising of Muslims by non-Muslims, with punishments varying from state to state, including imprisonment and caning. The law allows Muslims to proselytise without restriction. State governments have exclusive authority over allocation of land for, and the construction of, all places of worship as well as land allocation for all cemeteries. All Islamic houses of worship – including mosques and prayer rooms – fall under the authority of the Department of Development of Islam (JAKIM) and corresponding state Islamic departments; officials at these departments must give permission for the construction of any mosque or prayer room. National identity cards specify religious affiliation, and the government uses them to determine which citizens are subject to sharia. The cards identify Muslims in print on the face of the card; for members of other recognised religions, religious affiliation is encrypted in a smart chip within the identity card. Married Muslims must carry a special photo identification of themselves and their spouse as proof of marriage. Foreign missionaries and international students enrolling in religious courses must apply for entry with the Department of Immigration. These classes of visas are issued to applicants on a year-to-year basis and a national body representing the respective faiths must endorse the applicant's qualifications.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation of recognition and registration procedures in favour of legal registration, grounds for group investigation are ambiguous and are vulnerable to being misused against groups unfavoured by the state, non-recognition for any non-Islamic group, registration fee is undisclosed, the state allocates land for building places of worship but this policy could easily be misused against groups unfavoured by the state.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic religious materials are restricted from importation); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to proselytise Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the powers of the JAKIM to control the practice of Islam in the country is paramount; this should be combined with a dismantlement of the present Censorious apparatus of legislation and procedures restricting religious activity and the process of registration.

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Maldives, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); theism is affirmed in the oaths of office.**

Human rights instruments: Maldives is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Maldives did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – as no other religions are able to exist legally in the Maldives other than Islam, this in effect creates a situation of non-registration whereby no procedures legal registration of non-Islamic religions are offered. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs (MIA) continued to maintain control over all matters related to religion and religious belief, including requiring imams to use government-approved sermons in Friday services. The law prohibits the conversion of a Muslim to another religion. By law, a violation may result in the loss of the convert's citizenship, although a judge may impose a harsher punishment per sharia jurisprudence. By law, no one may deliver sermons or explain religious principles in public without obtaining a licence from the MIA. Imams may not prepare Friday sermons without government authorisation. To obtain a licence to preach, the law specifies an individual must be a Sunni Muslim, have a degree in religious studies from a university recognised by the government, and not have been convicted of a crime in sharia court. The law also sets educational standards for imams to ensure they have theological qualifications the government considers adequate. Government regulations stipulate the requirements for preaching and contain general principles for the delivery of religious sermons. The regulations prohibit making statements in sermons that may be interpreted as racial or gender discrimination, discouraging access to education or health services in the name of Islam, or demeaning the character of and/or creating hatred toward persons of any other religion. The law provides for a punishment of two to five years in prison or house arrest for violations of these provisions. Anyone who assists in such a violation is subject to imprisonment or house arrest for two to four years and a fine of 5,000 to 20,000 rufiyaa ($330 to $1,300). The law requires foreign scholars, imams and preachers, to ensure their sermons conform to the country's norms, traditions, culture, and social etiquette. Propagation of any religion other than Islam is a criminal offence, punishable by two to five years in prison or house arrest. Proselytising to change denominations within Islam is also illegal and carries the same penalty. If the offender is a foreigner, authorities may revoke the individual's licence to preach in the country (if they have one) and deport the individual. By law, mosques and prayer houses are under the control of the MIA. The law prohibits the establishment of places of worship for non-Islamic religious groups. The law states, "Non-Muslims living in or visiting the country are prohibited from openly expressing their religious beliefs, holding public congregations to conduct religious activities, or involving Maldivians in such activities." By law, those expressing religious beliefs other than Islam face imprisonment or house arrest of up to five years, fines ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 rufiyaa ($330 to $1,300), and deportation. The law prohibits importation of any items the MIA deems contrary to Islam, including religious literature, religious statues, alcohol, pork products, and pornographic materials. Penalties for contravention of the law range from imprisonment for three months to three years. It is against the law to offer alcohol to a citizen, although government regulations permit the sale of alcoholic beverages to foreigners on resort islands. Individuals must request permission from the Ministry of Economic Development to import restricted goods.

Key restriction tools imposed: Islamic preaching and proselytising that is unapproved by the state is prohibited as is all non-Islamic proselytism, non-recognition and non-registration for any religion or denomination other than Sunni Islam, obtaining a licence for an imam necessitates receiving a degree in religious studies from the government-approved university, state definition of religion, state supervision of sermons delivered by imams.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal and loss of citizenship for those who attempt to convert away from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic religious materials are prohibited from importation); **monasticism** (not free; non-Islamic monasticism illegal); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to proselytise Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; non-Islamic expression illegal); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; non-Islamic literature illegal); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present recognition system must take place in order to resume any semblance of religious freedom in the country; this would involve the revocation of all legislation restricting religious activity and the disestablishment of Sunni Islam as the state religion if freedom of religion or belief according to international law is not securable without intervention from sharia law; a new recognition system should be established in order to ensure the provision of both existential recognition and legal registration for all belief systems and across all levels of activity.

Mali, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Mali is a secular state**; **state privilege (Islam)**; **theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Mali is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Mali did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: discriminatory quasi-mandatory registration – although the law states that all public associations, including all religious groups, except for groups practicing indigenous beliefs (such as animism), must register with the government, no penalties are prescribed for remaining unregistered. There are no tax benefits or other legal benefits tied into registration. To register, applicants must submit copies of a declaration of intent to create an association, notarised copies of bylaws, copies of policies and regulations, notarised copies of a report of the first meeting of the association's general assembly, and lists of the leaders of the association, with signature samples of three of the leaders. Upon review, if approved, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD) grants the certificate of registration. Malregistration – the ongoing war in Mali and the insurgency of Islamist militants in rural areas means the central government does not have the full capacity to enforce its registration laws and protect registered religious or belief organisations throughout the territory it claims. A new draft law would enable the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Worship, and Customs (MARCC) to more easily oversee religious or belief organisations and adjudicate their registration alongside the MATD.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, non-beneficial registration, signature quota (three leaders of the registrant group).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that possesses provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration for all belief systems and at multiple levels of activity; revoke signature quota and non-beneficial registration policy; to become Dynamic, the Malian government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage the aforementioned recognition system but should relinquish its control of such an agency upon its establishment in order to ensure the agency's independence from government.

Malta, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the presidential oath and the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Malta is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Malta did not vote on the UDHR; Malta is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government, the fact that for use of a building as a place of worship requires a permit from the Planning Authority means that indirect registration is required to conduct certain "basic religious activities". All religious groups may organise and run private religious schools, and their clergy may perform legally recognised marriages and other religious functions.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation of recognition and registration procedures in favour of the latter, mandatory indirect registration, non-response and delay to applications (one such application has been pending since 2017).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for existential recognition in the country and multi-level recognition is advisable; to become Dynamic, the Maltese government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage the aforementioned recognition system but should relinquish its control of such an agency upon its establishment in order to ensure the agency's independence from government; existential recognition provided to all belief systems and at multiple levels along with fixing some of the minor issues in the present system identified herein should see Malta ascend to Dynamic classification.

Marshall Islands, Republic of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Marshall Islands is a secular state**; **state privilege (Christianity)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Marshall Islands is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Marshall Islands was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Marshall Islands did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups need only register with the government to receive tax exemption; in other words, there is no law requiring religious groups to register. Religious groups may only register under the secular designations 'nonprofit corporation' or 'cooperative'. The law states the tax on gross revenue shall not be applied to "corporations, associations, or societies organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, or educational purposes." In addition, goods imported into the country by "churches for their own religious, educational, or charitable purposes" are exempt from import duty. The constitution allows the government to extend financial aid to religiously supported institutions to provide nonprofit educational, medical, or social services, on the condition that such services do not discriminate among religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation of recognition and registration procedures in favour of the latter.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition distinct from that of legal registration in order to become receptive; in order to become Dynamic, the Marshallese government would need to establish a recognition agency to manage the aforementioned recognition system but should relinquish its control of such an agency upon its establishment in order to ensure the agency's independence from government.

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Mauritania, Islamic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution and in oaths of office.**

Human rights instruments: Mauritania is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Mauritania was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Mauritania did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: discriminatory-mandatory registration – the Mauritanian government registers non-Islamic religious as NGOs rather than as religious or belief organisations while Islamic groups do not need to register. The law allows for non-Muslim religious groups to register and operate by applying through both the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the MIATE, although there are no reports of any such groups having registered. In January 2021, the National Assembly adopted a new law on associations (the "NGO law"), signed into law by President Ghazouani in December 2021, that changed the registration system from an authoritative system controlled by the MOI to a declarative system in which NGOs are automatically granted authorisation to operate 60 days after they submit their registration to authorities. Faith-based NGOs must also agree to refrain from proselytising or otherwise promoting any religion other than Islam. The law requires the MOI to authorise in advance all group meetings, including non- Islamic religious gatherings and those held in private homes.

Recognition policy: the constitution defines the country as an Islamic republic and recognises Islam as the sole religion of its citizenry and the state.

Key restriction tools imposed: all public gatherings, including those for religious purposes, must be authorised in advance by the Ministry of Interior (MOI), it remains illegal for non-Islamic religious groups to proselytise or convert citizens and to express their religion publicly, non-recognition for any non-Sunni religion or denomination, illegal to print and distribute non-Islamic religious materials.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal and loss of citizenship for those who attempt to convert away from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic religious materials are prohibited from importation); **monasticism** (not free; non-Islamic monasticism illegal); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to proselytise Muslims and citizens that engage in non-Islamic proselytism will lose their citizenship); **public expression and observance** (not free; non-Islamic expression illegal); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; non-Islamic literature illegal); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the current system is the necessary precursor to attaining any kind of semblance of religious freedom; repeal laws criminalising conversion from Islam and proselytism by non-Muslims, as well as terminally restrictive laws that abuse citizenship.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Mauritius, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Mauritius is a secular state; Anglicanism, Catholicism, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Hinduism, Islam, Presbyterianism, Seventh-day Adventism are state-recognised; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance and judicial oath.**

Human rights instruments: Mauritius is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Mauritius did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: quasi-mandatory registration – although Mauritian law states that the registration of religious groups is mandatory, unregistered groups operate without penalties. Religious groups are required to register under the secular designation 'association', thus creating a vertical system due to the disparity between being recognised as a religion and as an association. Registration is handled by the Registrar of Associations. Applicant groups must have a minimum of seven members with designated leadership responsibilities. The finance ministry may grant these other groups tax-exempt privileges. Religious groups must obtain both residence and work permits for each foreign missionary. The Prime Minister's Office is the final authority on the issuance of these documents. The government grants residence permits to missionaries for a maximum of three years, with no extensions.

Recognition policy: parliamentary decrees recognise the six main religious groups present prior to independence in 1968 (Hindus, Catholics, Muslims, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Seventh-day Adventists) as well as the Church of Jesus Christ, which was recognised in 1985. These groups receive annual lump sum payments from the finance ministry based on the number of members who identified as such during the last census. The government continued to fail to act on a request by the Assembly of God to be recognised as a religion. The group sought for approximately 20 years to be recognised as a religion rather than an association.

Key restriction tools imposed: hypervertical recognition is in effect, leadership quota, non-recognition for any religion not already recognised by the 1968 parliamentary decree which thereby excludes all new religious movements and other minorities, non-response to the application for recognition made by the Assemblies of God 20 years ago.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Extend procedures for existential recognition to all belief systems, denominations and communities in the country; to become Dynamic, Mauritius will need to establish a recognition agency to manage its recognition system; revoke the hypervertical recognition system, the imposed leadership quota and the policy of non-recognition.

United Mexican States



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Mexico is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Mexico is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Mexico voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – religious groups are not required to register with the government "to operate" although the legislation also states that to convert an existing building into a place of worship requires prior registration. As operating a place of worship by at least renting is regarded in RoRB standards to constitute a basic religious activity, registration becomes in effect mandatory. Religious groups may register under the religious designation 'religious association'. The General Directorate for Religious Affairs (DGAR) handles registration procedures. Registration is required to negotiate contracts, purchase or rent land, apply for official building permits, receive tax exemptions, or hold religious meetings outside customary places of worship. Effective December 5, 2022, religious groups registering for the first time may start their registration online; however, representatives must finalise it in person. Religious groups must apply for permits to construct new buildings or convert existing buildings into places of worship. Any religious building constructed after January 27, 1992, is the property of the group that built it and is subject to relevant taxes. All religious buildings erected before then are considered part of the national patrimony and owned by the state. Applicants must certify that the church or other religious group observes, practices, propagates, or instructs a religious doctrine or body of religious beliefs; has conducted religious activities in the country for at least five years; has established domicile in the country; and shows sufficient assets to achieve its purpose. Registered associations may freely organize their internal structures and adopt bylaws or rules pertaining to their governance and operations, including the training and appointment of their clergy. They may engage in public worship and celebrate acts for the fulfilment of the association's purpose lawfully and without profit. They may propagate their doctrine in accordance with applicable regulations and participate in the creation, management, maintenance, and operation of private welfare, educational, and health institutions, provided the institutions are not for profit. Religious associations must notify the government of their intention to hold a religious meeting outside their licensed place or places of worship. Religious associations may not hold political meetings of any kind or own or operate radio or television stations. Government permission is required for commercial radio or television to transmit religious programming. A visa category exists for foreign clergy and religious associates to obtain a temporary resident visa or visitor visa without authorisation to perform paid religious activities.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, confinement, financial quota, in-person registration, longevity quota, nationality quota, stipulated qualifications for registered are ambiguous lending to their misuse against unfavoured groups (possible state definition of religion).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition in addition to the provisions for legal registration; revoke all restriction tools identified such as longevity quotas and in-person registration as well as the policy of confinement; establish a nationwide recognition agency; resolve the issue of pseudo-mandatory registration.

Micronesia, Federated States of

2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Micronesia is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity).**

Human rights instruments: Micronesia is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Micronesia is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Micronesia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are only required to register with the government if they seek exemption from tax.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, the registration procedures are unstructured.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for existential recognition; to become Dynamic, establish an independent recognition agency to manage the system.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Moldova, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Moldova is a secular state; state privilege (Moldovan Orthodox Church).**

Human rights instruments: Moldova is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Moldova did not vote on the UDHR; Moldova is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the law states that groups do not need to register to operate, this principle is undermined by the fact that unregistered groups cannot conduct the following: build places of worship, own land for cemeteries or other property, publish or import religious literature, open bank accounts, or employ staff. Of particular is the concern is the inability for unregistered groups to publish or import religious literature as well as to build place of worship (it is unsure whether this includes operating such places of worship). As these two actions are seen in RoRB standards as 'basic religious activities' that should not need registration, registered becomes pseudo-mandatory. The Public Services Agency (PSA) handles registration procedures. To register, religious groups must present a declaration including its exact name, fundamental principles of belief, organisational structure, scope of activities, financing sources, and rights and obligations of membership. The law also requires a group to show it has at least 100 founding members. A religious group must present proof it has access to premises where it can conduct religious activities, but it does not need to own this property. The PSA is required by law to register a religious group within 15 days if the registration request meets all legal requirements. The applicant may request an extension if the government determines the documentation submitted is insufficient. Further benefits of registration includes exemptions from land and property taxes and the ability to establish affiliate associations and foundations. The law permits local registered religious groups to change their denominational affiliation or dissolve themselves. The law allows individuals to redirect 2 percent of their income tax to nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) or religious groups but groups must be registered with the PSA and have been active in the country for a minimum of one year before applying for this benefit. Groups must also use the funds received only for social, moral, cultural, and/or charitable activities and certain administrative costs; and present reports on the use of the funds. Under the law, the Ministry of Justice has the right to request a suspension of the registered status of a religious group if it "carries out activities that harm the constitution or laws" or "affect state security, public order, [or] the life and security of the people." The law also provides for suspension or revocation of a religious group's registration in case of violation of international agreements or for political activity. The law prohibits religious entities from engaging in political activity or "abusive proselytism," defined as the action of changing religious beliefs through coercion. Foreign missionaries may submit work contracts or volunteer agreements to apply for temporary residency permits and may reside and work in paid status or as unpaid volunteers. Only missionaries working with registered religious groups may apply for temporary residency permits. Foreign religious workers with these permits must register with the National Agency for Employment and the Bureau for Migration and Asylum. They must present documents confirming the official status of the registered religious group for which they will work, papers confirming their temporary residence, and proof of valid local health insurance. Foreign missionaries belonging to registered religious groups who do not wish to apply for temporary residency may remain in the country for 90 days on a tourist visa. Malregistration – the ongoing separatist movement of Transnistria means the central Moldovan government does not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the entire territory its claims.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, grounds for deregistration and dissolutions of religious groups are so broad that they are vulnerable to being misused against groups unfavoured by the state, membership quota, nationality quota, proof of premises.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free; however, ambiguous legislation could be used against proselytising groups that are unfavoured by the state); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Provide means for existential recognition that are extended to all belief systems, denominations and communities; revoke all identified restriction tools such as membership quotas; establish a recognition agency that is independent of government for the management of the recognition system and the promotion of both religious education and the diversity of religious belief and practice.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Monaco, Principality of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Catholicism); Judaism, Protestantism and Russian Orthodox Church are also recognised by the state.**

Human rights instruments: Monaco is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Monaco did not vote on the UDHR; Monaco is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not demand that religious groups register, the fact that to open a place of worship or to open or rent an office or property requires approval from the government in effect makes registration mandatory due to this being classified a 'basic religious activity' in RoRB standards. Also included as benefits of registration is legally hiring employees. The Ministry of Interior handles registration procedures and registration is framed as 'official recognition'. The ministry must respond to such requests within one month or approval is automatic. In addition to obtaining official government recognition, any religious group wishing to construct a place of worship in a public space must receive prior approval from the Ministry of the Interior. The government does not tax religious institutions.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation of registration procedures with language regarding recognition, secondary procedures exist each time a religious group seeks to build (or possibly convert) a place of worship, vertical recognition is in effect (verticalism), the dispute between the government and Jehovah's Witnesses was settled with the Witnesses by registering the Jehovah Witnesses Association (it is likely this registration does not equate to the same degree of recognition enjoyed by Jewish, Protestant and Russian Orthodox communities).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Remove instances of partial recognition (which would mean the disestablishment of Catholicism as the state religion if the same degree of recognition cannot be bestowed to groups than Catholics); establish a recognition system that provides existential recognition and legal registration to all applicant groups regardless of their beliefs and practices; establish a recognition agency to deal with this recognition system independently of the state; resolve minor issues identified within the recognition system.

Mongolia

2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Mongolia is a secular state; state privilege (Buddhism).**

Human rights instruments: Mongolia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Mongolia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – to legally operate, religious groups must register with both the local, provincial and national authorities (i.e., the General Authority for State Registration), making registration mandatory for all religious or belief organisations. There remains a lack of clarity on the specifics of registration procedures and the registry duration, allowing for arbitrary enforcement of registration laws by local and provincial authorities. Religious groups must renew their registrations (in most cases annually) with multiple government institutions across local, provincial, and national levels. Each individual branch (or place of worship) of a religious organisation is required to register or renew as an independent legal entity, regardless of any affiliation with a registered parent organisation. Some local authorities require children under the age of 16 to provide written parental permission to participate in church activities. A religious group must provide the following documentation to the relevant local provincial or municipal representative assembly when applying for registration: a letter requesting registration, a letter from the lower-level local authority granting approval to conduct religious services, a brief description of the group, the group's charter, documentation on the group's founding, a list of leaders, financial information, a declaration of assets (including any real estate owned), a lease or rental agreement (if applicable), brief biographic information on individuals wishing to conduct religious services, and the expected number of worshippers. A religious group must provide the General Authority its approved registration application to receive a certificate for operation. The renewal process requires a religious group to obtain a reference letter from the lower-level local authority (district/soum level) to be submitted with the required documents (updated as necessary) to the local provincial or municipal representative assembly. During the renewal process, the local provincial or municipal representatives commonly request a safety inspection of the religious organisation's offices and places of worship and will order remediation of any deficiencies found. Upon approval, the relevant provincial or municipal representative assembly issues a resolution granting the religious institution permission to continue operations, and the organisation sends a copy of the approved registration renewal to the General Authority, which enters the new validity dates on the religious institution's certificate for operation. The law regulating the legal status of foreign nationals prohibits noncitizens from advertising, promoting, or practicing "inhumane" religions that could damage the national culture. The religion law includes a similar prohibition on religious institutions, both foreign and domestic, conducting "inhumane" or culturally damaging activities within the country. Foreigners seeking to conduct religious activities, including proselytising, must obtain religious visas, and all foreigners are prohibited from proselytising, promoting, and practicing any religion that violates the "national culture" and law. Only registered religious groups may sponsor foreigners for religious visas. Foreigners who enter the country on other classes of visas are not allowed to undertake activities that advertise or promote any religion (as distinct from personal worship or other individual religious activity, which is permitted). Under the law, "Engaging in business other than one's purpose for coming" constitutes grounds for deportation.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation in favour of registration, annual mandatory reregistration (including a recertification process and a safety inspection which could be an opportunity to misuse procedures against unfavoured groups to deregister), arbitrary enforcement, each religious building including places of worship must register with the government, excessive informational requirements are requested as part of registration procedures, localisation and provincialisation of registration procedures as well as the necessity to register at the national level, non-recognition of any non-Buddhist religion (with the possible exception of Mongolian shamanism or Tengrism), onerous registration procedures (including the requirement to gain certification from the General Authority).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present restrictive apparatus that misuses recognition to the advantage of the government to control religious belief and practice of citizens; repeal laws that call for mandatory registration and at local, provincial and national levels (segmentation); remove all forms of subjective language in the legislation that is misused to restrict religious activity.

Montenegro



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Montenegro is a secular state; the state has agreements with Islamic Community of Montenegro (ICM), Jewish Community of Montenegro (JCM), and Holy See.**

Human rights instruments: Montenegro is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Montenegro was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Montenegro did not vote on the UDHR; Montenegro is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the 2021 religious freedom law stated that religious groups no longer had to register with the government and only had to register to attain or maintain legal entity status, the fact that registration is a necessary prerequisite to a religious group renting property to conduct religious services (as it is listed as a registration benefit) which is a basic religious activity, registration becomes pseudo-mandatory. The law makes a distinction between religious groups registered under the 1977 registration law and the 2021 religious freedom law and groups are register in separate registries depending under which they are registered. Those registered under the 2021 law are referred to as 'new religious communities'. Groups listed in either registry have legal status, which gives them the right to own or rent property; hold bank accounts in their own name; hire employees; receive a tax exemption for donations and sales of goods or services directly related to their religious activities; and receive judicial protection of their community, members, and assets. Unregistered religious groups also have the right to freely practice their faith, including to proselytise and receive donations and are eligible to receive financial or other assistance from the state through the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights (MHMR). To register, a religious group must have at least three adult members who are citizens or have legal status in the country, and provide its name and organising documents, the names of its officials, address of the group's headquarters, and location(s) where religious services will be performed. The group must have a headquarters in the country and a name that differs from groups already registered. The government has bilateral cooperation agreements (BCAs) with Serbian Orthodox Church, Islamic Community of Montenegro, Holy See and the Jewish Community of Montenegro. It remains unclear how and whether or not other religious groups have the opportunity to establish their own BCAs with the government. The law allows all religious groups, including unrecognised ones, to conduct religious services and rites in churches, shrines, and other premises designated by local governments, but it requires approval from municipal police for such activities at any other public locations.

Key restriction tools imposed: introduction of new property laws in 2020 that could see some religious buildings constructed or acquired prior to 1918 confiscated by the state if a religious community cannot prove their ownership of such buildings, membership quota of 3 adult members, nominal restriction, the government must ensure that bilateral cooperation agreements are offered to all religious groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system independent of government control in order to qualify for Dynamic classification; there are some minor existent issues within the present recognition that also need to be resolved before Montenegro is designated Receptive; these involve the removal of membership quotas and other restriction tools imposed as identified above.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Morocco, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); Sunni Muslims and Jews are the only religious communities recognised in the constitution as being native to the country; theism is affirmed in the national motto.**

Human rights instruments: Morocco is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Morocco was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Morocco did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not demand registration for religious groups, unregistered groups may only worship or conduct services privately. As public services are a key element of the activities of a religious group, this rule makes registration mandatory. Religious or belief organisations may registered under the secular designation 'association' and must do so they it wish to open and hold bank accounts, rent property, acquire land and building grants, and have access to customs exemptions for imports necessary for religious activities or hold public gatherings. Sunni Muslim and Jewish groups do not need to register as associations to conduct these activities. Associations must register with local Ministry of Interior officials in the jurisdiction of the association's headquarters. An individual representative of a religious group neither recognised nor registered as an association may be held liable for any of the group's public gatherings, transactions, bank accounts, property rentals, or petitions to the government. The registration application must contain the name and purpose of the association; the name, nationality, age, profession, and residential address of each founder; and the address of the association's headquarters. The constitution provides civil society associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) the right to organise themselves and exercise their activities freely within the scope of the constitution. The law on associations prohibits organisations that pursue activities the government regards as "illegal, contrary to good morals, or aimed at undermining the Islamic religion, the integrity of the national territory, or the monarchical regime, or which call for discrimination."

Recognition policy: the law does not allow Moroccan Christians to be buried in Christian cemeteries or to hold Christian names. Since only Sunni Muslim and Jewish religious groups are considered native to the country, all other religious groups are considered foreign-run. Many foreign-resident Christian churches (churches run by and attended by foreign residents only) are registered as associations. The Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and Anglican churches maintain different forms of official status. The Russian Orthodox and Anglican Churches are registered as branches of international associations through the embassies of Russia and the United Kingdom, respectively. Protestant and Catholic churches, whose existence as foreign-resident churches predates the country's independence in 1956, as well as the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches, maintain a special status recognised by the government, which allows them to preserve houses of worship and assign foreign clergy.

Key restriction tools imposed: broad stipulations could allow the government to prohibit religious groups it simply does not favour, excessive informational requirements (biographical information requested of founders), individual liability for the actions of the whole religious group to which they belong, localisation of registration procedures, state definition of religion (as seen in state certification of imams), vertical recognition is in effect (Islam receives the highest recognition as the state religion while Judaism receives a lesser degree of recognition perhaps pseudo-recognition from the state; some Protestant churches, the Catholic Church as well as Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches maintain special recognised status; Sunni Muslims and Jews are the only religious communities recognised by the state).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish procedures for legal registration of religious entities that are separate from secular ones; establish provisions for existential recognition for all belief systems and their derivatives; repeal any laws that restricts basic religious activities and curb misuses of the registration system that seek the same goal.

Mozambique, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Mozambique is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Mozambique is partied to the ICCPR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Mozambique is not partied to the ICESCR; Mozambique did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates all NGOs to register with the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional, and Religious Affairs which includes religious or belief organisations. Under the law, "religious organisations" are charities or humanitarian organisations, while "religious groups" refer to particular denominations. Religious groups register at the denominational level or congregational level if they are unaffiliated. Religious groups and organisations register by submitting an application, providing identity documents of their local leaders, and presenting documentation of declared ties to any international religious group or organisation. There are no penalties for failure to register; however, religious groups and organisations must show evidence of registration to open bank accounts, file for exemption of customs duties for imported goods, or submit visa applications for visiting foreign members. In May 2022, parliament passed an anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism law that requires NGOs, including churches, to publish annual financial accounts of their income and expenditures and to keep eight years of financial records. There is a bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) between the government and the Holy See which defines the Catholic Church's rights and responsibilities in the country. The agreement recognises the Catholic Church as a legal personality and recognises the church's exclusive right "to regulate ecclesiastical life and to nominate people for ecclesiastical posts." The agreement requires Catholic Church representatives to register with the government to benefit from the church's status. The accord also gives the Catholic Church the exclusive right to create, modify, or eliminate ecclesiastical boundaries; however, it stipulates that ecclesiastical territories must report to a church authority in the country. It remains unclear whether or not other religious or belief organisations have the opportunity to establish their own BCAs with the government and how they may go about this. Malregistration – the ongoing insurgency of Islamist militants in Cabo Delgado Province means the central government does not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the territory it claims.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements, the government must ensure that all religious groups have access to bilateral cooperation agreements.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; possibly subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a new recognition system whose procedures are exclusive to religious entities and which provides for both existential recognition and legal registration for all belief systems and their derivatives and at multiple levels of activity; revoke excessive informational requirements and the mandatory registration order.

Myanmar, Republic of the Union of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Myanmar is a secular state; state privilege (Buddhism); Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and animism also receive constitutional recognition as religions in the country.**

Human rights instruments: Myanmar is partied to the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Myanmar is not partied to the ICCPR; Myanmar voted in favour of the UDHR as Burma.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious organisations must register with the government to conduct any religious services or other 'basic religious activities' making registration mandatory. This official status is required for organisations to gain title to land, obtain construction permits, and conduct religious activities. According to regime changes made to the law on registering organisations in October 2022, all local NGOs must now register, regardless of religious affiliation. Failure to comply may result in a prison term of up to five years or a fine of more than K5 million ($2,400), or both. The law bans any organisation of Buddhist monks other than the nine state- recognised monastic orders. Violations of this ban are punishable by immediate public defrocking and criminal penalties. The nine recognised orders submit to the authority of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee (SSMNC or Ma Ha Na), an independent but government-supported body that oversees Buddhist affairs and whose members are elected by monks and continues to function under the regime. Malregistration – due to the ongoing internal conflict, the government may not be able to administer registration law throughout the territory it claims.

Recognition policy: the election law states that a candidate's parents must be citizens at the time of the candidate's birth; authorities have denied citizenship to most Rohingya, thus precluding most Rohingya from running for office. A religious conversion law regulates conversion through an extensive application and approval process through a township-level Religious Board for Religious Conversion; however, the law is rarely applied, and many townships do not have conversion boards. The applicant must be older than 18 and must undergo a waiting period of up to 180 days; if the applicant still wishes to convert, the board issues a certificate of religious conversion. A population control law allows for the designation of special zones where population control measures may be applied, including authorising local authorities to implement three-year birth spacing. To register a Buddhist marriage, a couple must appear in court with their national identity card (which identifies their religion as Buddhist) and attest that they are married. Buddhist marriages may be registered at any court with relevant jurisdiction. Christian marriages are regulated under a Christian marriage act dating from 1872, and to be recognised, must be officiated by a Christian religious figure registered with the Supreme Court. There are only a handful of ministers or priests registered in the country. The officiating church must submit details of a marriage from its registry to the Supreme Court within three months of the marriage ceremony solemnisation, and only the Supreme Court is permitted to recognise Christian marriages, making it nearly impossible for a Christian marriage to be legally recognised. Muslim marriages officiated by a mullah are recognised under the law with no court filing requirements.

Key restriction tools imposed: state-sanctioned monasticism, unstructured registration procedures, vertical recognition is in effect (although Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and animism receive recognition in the Constitution, they do not receive the same degree of recognition or state privilege as that of Buddhism), national identity cards display a person's religion.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; only nine Buddhist monastic orders are considered legal); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present order that systemically controls religion and belief and uses brutal force to maintain this control including the discontinuation of the genocide against the Rohingya people; establish a new recognition system that is inclusive of all belief systems and their derivatives, has provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration, and is able to conduct such recognition and registration at multiple levels of operation; revoke and repeal current laws that terminally restrict religious activity and procedures for recognition.

Namibia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Namibia is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance and in the presidential and ministerial oaths.**

Human rights instruments: Namibia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Namibia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not mandated to register with the government to operate although the laws do remain ambiguous. The law recognises religious or belief organisations under the secular designation 'voluntary association' without them having to register with the government or they may choose to register under the secular designation 'association without gain' with the Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade, and SME (small-to-medium enterprise) Development. Organisations included under either of these legal categories have the benefit of being exempt from paying taxes. If a religious group registers as an 'association without gain', it may seek to purchase land at a reduced rate. Traditional authorities or town councils determine whether to grant the reduced rate based on whether the organisation's use of the land will benefit the community. Like other foreigners seeking to work in the country, religious workers must obtain a work visa. There is no separate religious worker visa.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, ambiguous laws regarding registration laws. In February, Namibia Police (NAMPOL) shut down what they characterised as "fake churches" based on allegations that the churches were promoting civil unrest, inciting violence, engaging in unsafe health practices, and committing fraud. On February 28, the Namibian Christian Freedom Fighters (NCFF), a Christian activist group, staged a demonstration to protest what it said was unfair treatment by police and the unconstitutional closure of churches. According to local media, the president of the NCFF said authorities were "just looking for reasons to incriminate and close down churches". The NCFF petitioned the government about the church closures, stating that authorities were wrongly imposing an anti-witchcraft law from 1933 to limit religious rights and eliminate smaller independent religious groups in the country.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for existential recognition which would establish a recognition system; the degree to which such a system is inclusive of "traditional religions" and NRMs will determine the country's classification as either Receptive or Dynamic; establish a recognition agency to manage this recognition system that acts and makes decisions independent of government.

Nauru, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Nauru is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Nauru is partied to the UNCRC; Nauru signed the ICCPR but has not ratified it; Nauru is not partied to the ICESCR; Nauru was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Nauru did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – religious groups are required to register with the government to legally engage in proselytism, to build places of worship, to hold religious services and to officiate marriages, some of which are "basic religious activities", thus making registration mandatory. New religious groups seeking registration must have at least 750 enrolled members, land, a building in the country, and leadership by a Nauruan member of the clergy, who must reside in the country. The Catholic Church, Nauru Congregational Church, Assemblies of God, Nauru Independent Church, and Seventh-day Adventist Church are officially registered. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was still not registered by the end of 2022 although an official spokesperson for the Church said that it was making progress towards registration and was optimistic it would be successful in the near future.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, membership quota, nationality quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free; renting property is not subject to registration but building places of worship is); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish structured provisions for existential recognition distinct from legal registration; establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to manage the recognition system; revoke the membership quota and nationality quota imposed.

Nepal, Federal Democratic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Nepal is a secular state; state privilege (Hinduism and to a lesser degree Buddhism).**

Human rights instruments: Nepal is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Nepal did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: exclusionary registration – the law does not provide for the registration or official recognition of religious or belief organisations as religious entities, except for Buddhist monasteries. It is also not mandatory for Buddhist monasteries to register with the government, although doing so is a prerequisite for receiving government funding for maintenance of facilities, skills training for monks, and study tours. A monastery development committee under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation oversees the monastery registration process. Requirements for registration include providing a recommendation from a local government body, information on the members of the monastery's management committee, a land ownership certificate, and photographs of the premises. Pseudo-mandatory registration – all other religious or belief organisations may only register under the secular designations "NGO" or "non-profit organisation" to own land or other property, operate legally as institutions, or gain eligibility for public service-related government grants and partnerships. The ability for groups to operate as institutions legally is a 'basic religious activity' that should not be subjected to registration according to RoRB standards, making the registration policy pseudo-mandatory. Religious organisations follow the same registration process as other NGOs and nonprofit organisations, including preparing a constitution and furnishing information on the organisation's objectives as well as details on its executive committee members. To renew the registration, which must be completed annually, organisations must submit annual financial audits and activity progress reports.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, annual reregistration, excessive informational requirements, exclusionary registration, non-recognition of any religions except Buddhism and Hinduism.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal since 2017); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (free; renting property is not subject to registration but building places of worship is); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that possesses within its capacities means to existentially recognise and legally register all religious entities simultaneously and a different levels of operation and activity; to become Receptive, this system would need to be inclusive of all belief systems and would need to treat all applicants and entities equally regardless of their affiliations; repeal laws restricting proselytism and any policies of reregistration.

Netherlands, Kingdom of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **The Netherlands is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: the Netherlands is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; the Netherlands voted in favour of the UDHR; the Netherlands is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not require religious or belief organisations to register with the government. Under the law, if the tax authorities determine a group is "of a philosophical or religious nature," contributes to the general welfare of society, and is nonprofit and nonviolent, they grant it exemptions from all taxes, including income, value-added, and property taxes. In August 2022, the Dutch government recognised Scientology as a religion.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, ambiguous qualifications for tax-exempt status.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that manages the established recognition system and acts and makes decisions independent of the government.

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Conditions of state RoRB

New Zealand



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **New Zealand is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the Governor-General oath.**

Human rights instruments: New Zealand is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; New Zealand rejected the UNDRIP; New Zealand voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not require religious groups to register with it, the fact that registration is a prerequisite for legally collecting donations, a 'basic religious activity' according to RoRB standards, demonstrates that the New Zealand registration policy is pseudo-mandatory. Registration is handled by the Department of Internal Affairs, also includes tax benefits, and religious groups only have the choice to register under the secular designation 'charitable trust'. The registration application must include the trust document, bylaws of the organisation showing it is a charitable organisation, and a list of officers who state they are free from any conflict of interest and that they will not put their own interests above the organisation. There is no fee for registration.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Revoke the issue of pseudo-mandatory registration; to become Receptive, establish a recognition system that has the capacity to bestow existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously for all belief systems and their derivatives and at different levels of activity and operation; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that manages the established recognition system and acts and makes decisions independent of the government.

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Nicaragua, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Nicaragua is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Nicaragua is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Nicaragua voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – registration in Nicaragua is based on a system of annually renewable certificates that authorise a religious group or a religiously-affiliated NGO to operate legally in the country. The Catholic Church is exempt from some aspects of the registration requirements due to its bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) with the government. In accordance with a March 2022 amendment to the law that regulates NGOs, registration requires an application, articles of association, and designation of officers. The National Assembly must approve a group's application for "constitution," or legal standing. Following approval, the group must go through a second approval process with the Ministry of Interior before it can register as an association or NGO, allowing it to incur legal obligations, enter into contracts, and benefit from tax and customs exemptions. Following registration, religious groups are subject to the same regulations as other NGOs or associations. The Catholic Church is not required to register as a religious group because its presence in the country predates the legislation; however, the government requires organisations dedicated to charity or other social work affiliated with the Catholic Church to register. By law, organisations and persons receiving resources of foreign origin are barred from participating in domestic politics. The government can fine, imprison, or confiscate or freeze the assets of any person or entity in violation of this law. The law exempts registered religious organisations from the requirement to register as foreign agents with the Ministry of Interior. By law, those receiving exemptions are barred from participating in or supporting activities related to the country's internal or foreign affairs. Missionaries must obtain religious worker visas and provide information regarding the nature of their missionary work before the Ministry of Interior authorises their entry into the country. Locally based religious organisations must provide documentation and request travel authorisation from the Ministry of Interior prior to the arrival of visiting persons or religious groups. The process must be completed before arrival and generally takes several weeks to complete.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, annual reregistration, the government escalated its restrictions on Catholic worship services and arresting Catholic clergy, new legislation on residence permits increase restrictions, the state's closure of a Protestant television channel.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To become Receptive, establish a recognition system that has the capacity to bestow existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously for all belief systems and their derivatives and at different levels of activity and operation; remove all instances of politicisation in the registration system.

Niger, Republic of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Niger is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the presidential and other ministerial and senior government official oaths.**

Human rights instruments: Niger is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Niger did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government requires religious groups to register with the Customary and Religious Affairs Office within the Ministry of Interior; little distinction is made between religious or belief organisations and secular NGOs in law. Registration approval is based on submission of required legal documents, including the group's charter, minutes of the group's board of directors, annual action plan, and list of the organisation's founders. Only registered organisations are legally recognised entities. Non-registered groups are not permitted to operate, although some unregistered religious organisations reportedly operate without authorisation in remote areas. The Ministry of Interior requires clerics speaking to a large national gathering either to belong to a registered religious organisation or to obtain a special permit. Initial registration is probationary but religious groups wishing to obtain permanent legal status must undergo a three-year review period before the Customary and Religious Affairs Office can grant a change in legal status from probationary to permanent. The government prohibits open air, public proselytisation events by all religious groups due to national security concerns. There is no legal restriction on private, peaceful proselytisation or conversion of an individual from one religious faith to another as long as the group sponsoring the conversion is registered with the government. There are no restrictions on the issuance of visas for visiting religious representatives, although the long-term residency of foreign religious representatives must be approved by the Ministry of Interior.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, government regulation of places of worship, increased state restrictions on public religious activity since 2019, probationary legal status (temporary registration), religious conversion are only legal if the religious group receiving the convert is registered with the government, large religious gatherings require a government permit, open-air proselytising events are prohibited.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; subject to registration); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To become Receptive, establish a recognition system that is able to recognise and register simultaneously and at multiple levels; revoke mandatory registration; revoke government regulation of places of worship and temporary registration in the form of probationary legal status.

Nigeria, Federal Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Nigerian federal government is secular but Islam is the *de facto* state religion of Kano state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Nigeria is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Nigeria abstained from voting on the UNDRIP; Nigeria did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – religious groups needs only register to receive benefits but these do not include any 'basic religious activities' as outlined in RoRB standards. However, Katsina and Kaduna States have laws requiring licences for preachers, places of worship, and religious schools. In Katsina State, the law establishes a board with the authority to regulate Islamic schools, preachers, and mosques, including by issuing permits, suspending operations, and imprisoning or fining violators. The Katsina law stipulates a punishment of one to five years in prison, a fine of up to 500,000 naira ($1,100), or both for operating without a licence. In Kaduna State, the Interfaith Preaching Council issues permits to those who wish to preach in public and regulates against the use of foul, demeaning, or derogatory language against individuals or other religions based on recommendations from the Local Government Interfaith Committee. Violators of the law are subject to fines and/or two to five years imprisonment. Other states and local government areas establish their own modalities for licensing public preachers but do not licence religious organisations. The Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) authorises the federal government to intervene in the management of private entities and gives it broad and discretionary powers to withdraw, cancel, or revoke the certificate of any business or association; suspend and remove trustees (and appoint any one of their choice to manage the organisation "in the public interest"); take control of finances of any association; and merge two associations without the consent and approval of their members. Malregistration – the recent insurgency in the southeast of the country means the federal Nigerian government may not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, the new Companies and Allied Matters Act has the potential to place some smaller religious organisations under the control of the government.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; subject to registration); **hieroncy** (not free; states run according to Sharia law prohibited non-Islamic items from importation); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to licensing; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to licensing); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; subject to licensing); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present apparatus of restrictions and policies put in place to inhibit certain forms of religious activity; establishment of a recognition system whose decisions about recognition and registration permeate nationally in order to resolve inconsistencies between states that continue to plague the country's unity; establish a recognition agency that is able to act independent of government to manage recognition.

North Macedonia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **North Macedonia is a secular state; state privilege (Macedonian Orthodox Church – Archdiocese of Ohrid and to a lesser degree Catholic Church, Islamic Religious Community of Macedonia, Jewish Community, and Evangelical Methodist Church in Macedonia).**

Human rights instruments: North Macedonia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; North Macedonia did not vote on the UDHR; North Macedonia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not require religious groups to register with the government to conduct "basic religious activities". The five religious groups receiving state privilege are free to establish secondary schools, charities, and other social institutions while other groups must obtain registration first before receiving these benefits. There are three religious designations available for religious or belief organisations to register under: 'church', 'religious community' or 'religious group'. Once registered, a church, religious community, or religious group is exempt from property taxes on the property of the community only; they pay all other taxes, such as value-added tax and personal income tax on the salaries of their leaders. Groups are eligible to apply for restitution of properties nationalised during the Socialist era (provided the group or community existed and had property during that era), government funding to preserve religious objects or structures designated as cultural heritage, and construction permits for preservation of shrines and cultural sites. Unregistered groups may hold religious services or other meetings and proselytise, but they may not engage in certain activities such as establishing schools or receiving donations that are tax-deductible for the donor, and such groups are not tax exempt. The Skopje Basic Civil Court accepts religious registration applications and has eight business days to determine whether an application meets the legal criteria. The criteria include a physical administrative presence within the country, an explanation of its beliefs and practices that distinguish it from other religious organisations, and a unique name and official insignia. The organisation's application must also identify a supervisory body in charge of managing its finances and submit a breakdown of its financial assets and funding sources, as well as minutes from its founding meeting. The law allows multiple groups of a single faith to register. Leaders or legal representatives of registered religious groups must be citizens of the country. The court forwards approved applications to the CRRCG, the government body responsible for fostering cooperation and communication between the government and registered religious groups, which adds the organisation to its registry. The CRRCG has no oversight or ability to influence the registration process. If the court denies the application, the organisation may appeal the decision to the State Appellate Court. If the appellate court rules against the appeal, the organisation may file a human rights petition with the Constitutional Court, which is the highest court in the country having jurisdiction over human rights cases. If the Constitutional Court denies the petition, the organisation may further appeal the case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). All foreigners who seek to enter the country to carry out religious work or perform religious rites must obtain a work visa before arrival, a process that normally takes approximately four months. The CRRCG maintains a register of all foreign religious workers, and various government offices may approve or deny them the right to conduct religious work within the country. The CRRCG issues approvals for temporary residence permits and/or work visa applications for missionaries and religious workers on behalf of registered churches, religious communities, and religious groups; the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy verifies their compliance with the country's labour laws; and the Ministry of Interior reviews security aspects. Unregistered groups may apply for work permits and visas for their workers according to the normal procedure. Work visas are valid for six months, with the option to renew for an additional six months. Subsequent renewals are valid for one year. There is no limit to the number of visa renewals for which a religious worker may apply.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, government interference in the internal affairs of religious groups is reported, nationality quota, nominal restriction, some informational requirements such as "an explanation of [the group's] beliefs and practices that distinguishes it from other religious organisations" is ambiguous and could be easily misused against groups unfavoured by the state, vertical registration system is in effect.

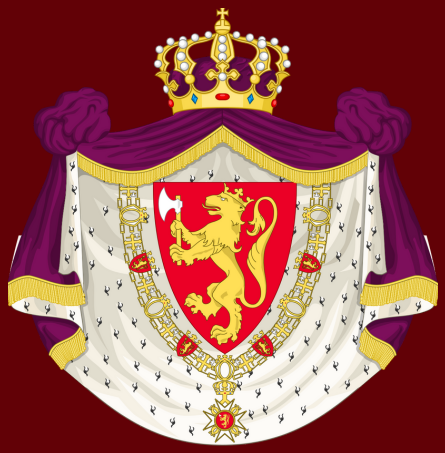
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that is able to provide existential recognition and legal registration to entities simultaneously and at different levels of activity; establish a recognition agency to manage and deal with this recognition system in a way that is autonomous from state control in order to avoid corruption and politicisation of the recognition and registration procedures; revoke the restriction tools identified such as nationality quota and nominal restriction.

Norway, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Norway is a secular state; state privilege (Church of Norway); theism is affirmed in the monarchical oath.**

Human rights instruments: Norway is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Norway voted in favour of the UDHR; Norway is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are only required to register with the government if they wish to receive financial support from the Norwegian government. According to the Religious Communities Act, religious and life stance communities with at least 50 registered members may apply for state subsidies, a decrease from the previous requirement of 500 adherents. Faith and life stance organisations must provide annual reports detailing activities, opportunities for children and youth, the use of the state subsidies, marital law administration, and gender equality, as well as any funds received from abroad. To register, a faith or life stance organisation must notify the government and provide its creed and doctrine, activities, names of board members, names and responsibilities of group leaders, operating rules – including who may become a member – voting rights, and the processes for amending statutes and dissolution. A group must report the national total number of members annually. If a religious group does not register, it does not receive financial support from the government. The law stipulates that the government can refuse applications for subsidies from organisations that receive funding from foreign states that "do not respect religious freedom." The law does not further interpret what constitutes a state that does not respect religious freedom and the government does not publish a list of such countries. Approval of state subsidies for religious and life stance communities is made at the county level. All registered faith and life stance organisations are eligible to apply for financial support from the government. The government pays prorated subsidies to 736 such organisations based on their 2022 membership when compared with membership in the Church of Norway. The government also continues to provide the Church of Norway with an annual block grant that pays the full cost of salaries, benefits, and pension plans of its employees. The government must provide additional funding to the church for maintenance of cemeteries and religious buildings, in addition to any provided by municipal governments.

Key restriction tools imposed: membership quota (but this is imposed as part of a mandatory registration order and is only used for groups that seek state funding so is permissible), non-recognition of all religions and denominations except the Church of Norway (hypervertical system).

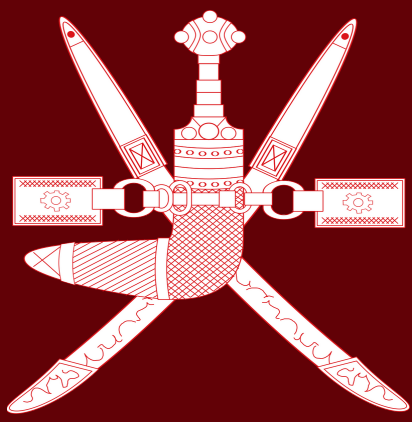
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Norway is fairly close to Dynamic status except for the imbalance between the support it provides to the Church of Norway and other organisations in addition to restrictive policies such as membership quotas; establish a recognition system that is able to provide existential recognition and legal registration to entities simultaneously and at different levels of activity and is inclusive of all belief systems; establish a recognition agency to manage and deal with this recognition system in a way that is autonomous from state control in order to avoid corruption and politicisation of the recognition and registration procedures.

Oman, Sultanate of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Caveated claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the monarchical oath.**

Human rights instruments: Oman is partied to the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Oman is not partied to the ICCPR; Oman did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: mandatory registration – all religious or belief organisations must register with the government to exist legally in Oman. The law does not specify rules, regulations, or criteria for gaining ministerial approval. Groups seeking registration must request meeting and worship space from one of the sponsor organisations recognised by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs (MERA). MERA. New, non-Muslim religious groups unaffiliated with a previously recognised sponsor must gain approval from MERA before they may register. Muslim groups must register, but the government – as the benefactor of the country's mosques – serves as their sponsor. MERA must also grant its approval for new Muslim groups to form. For non-Muslim groups, the ministry recognises the Protestant Church of Oman (a partnership between the Reformed Church of America and the Anglican Church), the Catholic Church in Oman, the al-Amana Centre (an interdenominational organisation affiliated with the Reformed Church of America), the Hindu Mahajan Temple, and the Anwar al-Ghubaira Trading Company in Muscat (Sikh) as official sponsors. The sponsors are responsible for recording and submitting to the ministry a statement of the group's religious beliefs and the names of its leaders. All individuals who deliver sermons in recognised religious groups must register with MERA. The licensing process for imams prohibits unlicensed lay members from preaching sermons in mosques, and licensed imams must deliver sermons within "politically and socially acceptable" parameters. Lay members of non- Muslim groups may lead prayers if they are specified as leaders in their group's registration application. The law restricts collective worship by non-Muslim groups to houses of worship on land specifically donated by the government for the purpose of collective worship. The law prohibits public proselytising by all religious groups, although the government authorises certain "Islamic propagation centers." The law states the government must approve the construction or leasing of buildings by religious groups. In addition, new mosques must be built at least one kilometre (0.6 miles) from existing mosques. Birth certificates issued by the government record an individual's religion. Other official identity documents do not do so. Foreigners on tourist visas who are not clergy may not preach, teach, or lead worship, even privately, unless they are sponsored by a recognised religious group, register with MERA, and receive a government permit. Visa regulations permit foreign clergy to enter the country to teach or lead worship under the sponsorship of registered religious groups, which must apply to MERA for approval before the visiting clergy member enters the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: an operating licence must be obtained for those wishing to provide sermons in registered religious groups (including for imams) and for which there are ambiguous qualifications, registration procedures are based on a restrictive sponsorship system which sometimes precedes registration itself (e.g. new non-Muslim groups must receive sponsorship before they can begin registration procedures), non-recognition for any non-Islamic religion, state definition of religion, there are different procedures of sponsorship for Muslim and non-Muslim religious groups, anti-discrimination laws only protect Islam and other religions considered to be Abrahamic by the government.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal except for certain Islamic propagation centres); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present apparatus that misuses recognition as a means to censor religion; repeal restrictive laws that seek to censor all forms of religious activity, both Islamic and non-Islamic; to become Receptive, the Omani government would need to establish a recognition system inclusive of all belief systems with the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously; the disestablishment of Islam would have to take place to ensure the recognition system was enshrined with equality if the government could not prove in practice that it would not treat Islam any different from other belief systems.

Pakistan, Islamic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Caveated claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution and in the oaths of all senior officials.**

Human rights instruments: Pakistan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Pakistan voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no established procedures for religious groups to register in the country. A semblance of registration is achieved in the registration of marriages of minority faiths and the successful construction of individual places of worship. The law prohibits publishing any criticism of Islam or its prophets or insults to others' religious beliefs. The law bans the sale of Ahmadi religious literature. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) designates religious affiliation on passports and requires religious information on national identity card and passport applications. Those wishing to be listed as Muslims must swear they believe Muhammad is the final prophet and must denounce the Ahmadi movement's founder as a false prophet and his followers as non-Muslim. There is no option to state "no religion." National identity cards are required for all citizens upon reaching the age of 18. Identification cards are used for voting, pension disbursement, social and financial inclusion programs, and other services. According to regulations, the only factors affecting admission to public schools are students' grades and home provinces, although students must declare their religious affiliation on application forms. This declaration is also required for private educational institutions, including universities. Students who identify themselves as Muslims must declare in writing they believe Muhammad is the final prophet, which is contrary to Ahmadi beliefs. Non-Muslims are required to have the head of their local religious communities verify their religious affiliation. There is no provision in the law for atheists. There is a 2 percent minimum admissions quota for religious minority students in public technical, professional, and higher education institutions in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Key restriction tools imposed: non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than Islam or traditional forms of Islam (excluding Islamic new religious movements), prohibition of the Ahmadi Muslim community (Ahmadis may not call themselves Muslims or assert they are adherents of Islam), both passports and national identity cards display a person's religious affiliation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; illegal); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present abuse of recognition and the vast apparatus that the government wields to perpetuate Terminal restrictions on religious activity; establishment of a new recognition system that treats all belief systems equally and bestows both existential recognition and legal registration through distinct procedures and across multiple levels of activity; the disestablishment of Islam may need to occur in order to ensure the system's equality if the government cannot prove in practice its equal treatment to religions; ongoing issues of normativism and societal intolerance of alternative belief identities should be resolved through more sophisticated means of religious education and the use of mutual recognition as a message spread by government on the importance of religious pluralism.

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Palau, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Palau is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Palau is partied to the UNCRC; Palau signed the ICCPR and the ICESCR but has not ratified either of these instruments; Palau was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Palau did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that religious groups, including foreign missionaries, register with the government. Registration involves religious groups having to obtain charters under the secular designation 'nongovernmental organisation'. Registration is handled by the Registrar of Corporations in the Office of the Attorney General. As NGOs, religious groups and mission agencies are exempt from paying taxes. To obtain a charter, a group must submit a written petition to the registrar of corporations and pay a filing fee of $250. The registrar of corporations reviews the application for statutory compliance and then requests the President sign a charter for the NGO. Foreign missionaries must obtain permits from the Division of Immigration, which is under the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection of the Ministry of Finance; there are no application fees. Applicants must provide police and medical clearances, and applications must include letters from the assigning church in the sending foreign country and the local accepting church. The permits are valid for a maximum of two years and may be renewed.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, completion of registration is dependent upon presidential signature (a form of authoritative decree restriction tool), the registration fee charged ($250) exceeds the $100 threshold set by RoRB standards.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that has the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously without discrimination of belief systems and has the capacity to bestow these forms of recognition at multiple levels of operation and activity; remove all forms of politicisation in the registration process and remove any ambiguity existent in the legislation; revoke the mandatory registration rule.

Panama, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Panama is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Panama is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Panama voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration (tapered application) – although the government does not explicitly require religious groups to register, the fact that one of the benefits of registration is listed as "the freedom to manage and administer [the group's] property" implies that registration is a necessary prerequisite for a religious group to either run or lease their own properties for conducting religious services which is classified as a "basic religious activity" and should not be subject to registration. Grants and subsidies from the government are included as benefits of registration. To register, a group must submit to the Ministry of Government a power of attorney, charter, names of its board members (if applicable), a copy of the internal bylaws (if applicable), and a four-balboa ($4) processing fee. Once the Ministry of Government approves the registration, the religious association must record the ministry's resolution in the Public Registry. Registered religious associations must apply to the Directorate of Internal Revenue of the Ministry of Economy and Finance to receive clearance for duty-free imports. The government may allot publicly owned properties to registered religious associations upon approval by the Legislative Tax Committee and the cabinet. The law states that income from religious activities is tax-exempt as long as it is collected through such activities as church and burial services, and charitable events. Immigration law grants foreign religious workers temporary missionary worker visas that they must renew every two years, for up to a total of six years. Catholic and Orthodox Christian priests and nuns are exempt from the two-year renewal requirement and receive six-year visas, with no limitation other than "respect for Christian morality." Clergy of other religious groups, as well as other religious workers, are also eligible for the special six-year visa but must submit additional documentation with their applications. These additional requirements include a copy of the organisation's bylaws, a Ministry of Government-issued registration certificate, and a letter from the organisation's leader in the country certifying the religious worker will be employed at its place of worship. The application fee is 250 balboas ($250) for all religious denominations.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, non-recognition for all non-Catholic religions and denominations.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that has the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives sufficiently and appropriately and at multiple levels of operation and activity; remove any instances of politicisation of registration; revoke the policy of non-recognition for all non-Catholics groups; to become Dynamic, the Panamanian government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the newly established recognition system independently from government.

Papua New Guinea, Independent State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Papua New Guinea is a secular state**; **state privilege (Christianity)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Papua New Guinea is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Papua New Guinea was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Papua New Guinea did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not required to register with the government to conduct what RoRB standards define as 'basic religious activities'. Religious groups are required to register with the government to hold bank accounts, own properties in the religious group's name, maintain limited individual liability, and apply to the Internal Revenue Commission (IRC) for exemption on income tax and to the Department of Treasury for exemption of import duty. The IRC does not maintain accurate information on how many groups are registered or from which religious group. To register, groups must provide documentation, including a list of board or executive committee members and a constitution. Foreign missionary groups are permitted to proselytise and engage in other missionary activities. Religious workers receive a three-year, special exemption visa from the government. Applications for the visa require a sponsor letter from a religious group in the country, an approved work permit from the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations, and a 100 kina ($29) fee.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, the registration benefit of "limited individual liability" implies that individual members or leader of unregistered groups do have individual liability for the actions of their group, unstructured recognition system.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that has the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives sufficiently and appropriately and at multiple levels of operation and activity; to become Dynamic, the Papua New Guinean government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the newly established recognition system independently from government.

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Paraguay, Republic of

2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Paraguay is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Paraguay is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Paraguay voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all groups religious or philosophical register with the Vice Ministry of Worship (VMW). Registered religious or belief organisations must submit annual reports stating the organisation's key leadership and functions. Organisations must complete a form containing 14 items, provide supporting documents to the VMW, and pay a fee of 140,000 guaranies ($19) to register. The form requests basic information, including entity name, mission or vision, history in the country, addresses of houses of worship, membership size, and types of activities. The VMW also requires the certification of a legal representative and the entity's bylaws as supporting documentation for registration. VMW regulations require that names of religious entities be sufficiently distinguishable to avoid confusing worshippers. Once registered, religious and philosophical groups must update their registration on an annual basis and pay an annual fee of 70,000 guaranies ($10). The VMW may apply non-monetary administrative sanctions against organisations that fail to register, including ordering the suspension of religious services and a fine of 2,200,000 guaranies ($301). The National Anti-Money-Laundering Secretariat requires that all religious organisations register as non-financial agents. Religious groups must demonstrate legal status as a nonprofit organisation and agree to annual recertification. Annual recertification requires groups to resubmit the registration form with updated information. Groups that fail to update their registration annually must pay a fine of 440,000 guaranies ($60). Religious leaders must submit to financial and criminal background checks. Foreign missionaries who are members of registered religious groups are eligible for no-cost residency visas from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Missionaries must also register annually with the VMW to receive official documentation identifying their status. Missionaries choosing not to register may enter the country on tourist visas.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, annual reregistration (fees are $9 which is half the original fee which is in alignment with RoRB standards on registration fees), excessive informational requirements, in-person completion of registration remains a major obstacle (e.g. having to travel to Asunción to pay registration fees and pick up a registration certificate), mandatory reregistration (through a process called recertification), monitorial requirements (including an annual report), nominal restrictions (e.g. new groups may not called themselves 'Catholic' due to a lack of distinction from Catholic Church), non-recognition for all non-Catholic religions and denominations.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Revoke the rule of mandatory registration, reregistration and annualisation as restriction tools; establish a revitalised recognition system that has the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives sufficiently and appropriately and at multiple levels of operation and activity; to become Dynamic, the Paraguayan government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the newly established recognition system independently from government.

Peru, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Peru is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Peru is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Peru voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: unconditional registration – the government does not require religious groups to register with it even to conduct 'basic religious activities' as defined in RoRB standards to receive various benefits that are typically tied into registration. For instance, regulations allow all religious groups, registered or not, to apply for tax exemptions and worker or resident visas directly with the pertinent government institutions. The registration procedure is conducted by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) which has an Office of Catholic Church Affairs to deal with the Catholic Church and an Office of Interconfessional Affairs to engage with all other religious groups. The stated purpose of the registry is to promote a religious group's integrity and to facilitate a productive relationship with the government. There is no minimum number of members required for a religious entity to register. Religious groups do not have to register to obtain institutional benefits, but registration grants them legal-person status (as a business or nongovernmental organisation) and allows them to engage directly with the government in that capacity, facilitating communication and potential requests for institutional benefits. Government regulations allow all religious groups, registered or not, to apply for tax exemptions and worker or resident visas directly with the pertinent government institutions. Registration is free, the process usually takes one week, and the MOJ helps in completing the application forms. By law, all prisoners, regardless of their religious affiliation, may practice their religion and seek the ministry of someone of the same faith. Foreign religious workers must apply for a visa through the National Superintendency for Migration (SNM) of the Ministry of Interior. If the religious group registers with the MOJ, the SNM accepts this as proof the applicant group is a religious organisation. If the group does not register with the MOJ, the SNM makes its decision on a case-by-case basis.

Recognition policy: the Holy See established a bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) with the government to that confirmed the institutional privileges in education, taxation, and immigration of religious workers for the Catholic Church. A religious freedom law exempts Catholic Church buildings, houses, and other real estate holdings from property taxes. Other religious groups often must pay property taxes on their schools and clerical residences, depending on the municipal jurisdiction and whether the group seeks and/or receives tax-exempt status as a nonprofit organisation. The law exempts Catholic religious workers from taxes on international travel. The government also exempts all work-related earnings of Catholic priests and bishops from income taxes. By law, the military may employ only Catholic clergy as chaplains.

Key restriction tools imposed: Catholic buildings and offices are exempt from taxation while even registered non-Catholic groups must still pay property taxes, different government offices deal with Catholic and non-Catholic registration procedures which implies procedures are different for whether a group identifies as part of the Catholic Church or not, it is essential that all groups are given the opportunity to establish bilateral cooperation agreements with the state, non-recognition for all non-Catholic religions and denominations at the present time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for existential recognition separate from legal registration; establish a recognition agency that manages the established recognition system independently of government; revoke state privilege or apply it to all religious groups.

Philippines, Republic of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **The Philippines is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: the Philippines is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; the Philippines favoured in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". The principal benefit of registration is for religious groups to receive tax-exempt status. Registration is handled by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). Religious groups must submit their articles of faith and bylaws to the SEC in order to register as religious corporations. The SEC requires religious corporations to submit annual financial statements. The law does not specify penalties for failure to register with the SEC. To register as a non-stock, nonprofit organisation, religious groups must meet the basic requirements for corporate registration with the BIR and must request a tax exemption from the BIR. The basic requirements for registration include a name verification of the religious corporation, articles of incorporation and bylaws, the name of a director, list of members, and a list of financial contributors. The BIR provides tax exemptions to newly established religious corporations that are then reviewed for renewal every three years. Registered religious groups may be fined by the BIR if they are late at filing financial statements and data sheets.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, dual registration (both the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Bureau of Internal Revenue are involved in registration, excessive informational requirements (e.g. a list of members), fines imposed for non-compliance of stringent registration procedures, monitorial requirements (annual financial statements), secondary procedure, reregistration every three years.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish separate procedures for religious entity registration and then for existential recognition and legal registration, all distinguished from the procedures established for secular and corporate entities; revoke the triennial reregistration policy and the other identified restriction tools such as secondary procedures, dual registration and excessive informational requirements; to become Dynamic, the Filipino government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the newly established recognition system independently from government.

Poland, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Poland is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Poland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Poland abstained from voting on the UDHR; Poland is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". Unregistration means that a religious group cannot own property or have a bank account in its own name. The Holy See has a bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) with the Polish government that defines the Catholic Church's rights and privileges. Fourteen other religious organisations have similar BCAs with the government while a further 171 registered religious groups have no established BCA. Only religious groups without BCAs need to register to obtain the benefits of registration, a process which is handled by the Ministry of Interior and Administration (MIA). To register, the law requires a group to submit a notarised application with the personal information of at least 100 citizen members; details about the group's activities in the country; background on the group's doctrine and practices; a charter and physical address; identifying information about its leaders; a description of the role of the clergy, if applicable; and information on funding sources and methods of new member recruitment. If the ministry rejects the registration application, religious groups may appeal to an administrative court. By law, the permissible grounds for refusal of an application are failure to meet formal requirements or inclusion in the application of provisions that may violate public safety and order, health, public morality, parental authority or freedom, and rights of other persons. Unregistered groups may worship, proselytise, publish, or import religious literature freely, and bring in foreign missionaries, but they have no legal recognition and are unable to undertake certain functions such as owning property or holding bank accounts in their name. The 191 registered and statutorily recognised religious groups and organisations receive other privileges not available to unregistered groups, such as the right to acquire property, teach religion in schools, and receive selective tax benefits. They are also exempt from import tariffs, property taxes, and income tax on their educational, scientific, cultural, and legal activities, and their official representatives are also exempt from income and property taxes.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements are requested as part of registration procedures (including personal information of at least 100 citizen members), it is essential that all religious groups are given access to bilateral cooperation agreements, membership quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Revoke state privilege for the Catholic Church except if such privileges are also equally bestowed to all religious denominations; establish a revitalised recognition system that has the capacity to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives sufficiently and appropriately and at multiple levels of operation and activity; to become Dynamic, the Polish government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the newly established recognition system independently from government; revoke the excessive informational requirements and the membership quota.

Portuguese Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Portugal is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Portugal is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Portugal did not vote on the UDHR; Portugal is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although religious groups are not mandated by the government to register, groups that do not register or fail to achieve the criteria for registration are not able to engage in activities classified as "basic religious activities" including the freedom to perform pastoral services for those in prisons, hospitals or the military. Religious groups may organise in a variety of forms that have national, regional, or local character. A denomination may organise as one national church or religious community or as several regional or local churches or religious communities. An international church or religious community may establish a representative organisation of its adherents separate from the branch of the church or religious community existing in the country. A registered church or religious community may create subsidiary or affiliated organisations, such as associations, foundations, or federations. All religious groups with an organised presence in the country may apply for registration with the registrar of religious corporate bodies in the Ministry of Justice. The requirements for registration include providing the organisation's official name, which must be distinguishable from all other religious corporate bodies in the country; the organising documents of the church or religious community associated with the group applying for registration; the address of the organisation's registered main office in the country; a statement of the group's religious purposes; documentation of the organisation's assets; information on the organisation's formation, composition, rules, and activities; provisions for dissolution of the organisation; and the appointment method and powers of the organisation's representatives. Subsidiary or affiliated organisations included in the parent group's application are also registered; if not included, they must register separately. The ministry may reject a registration application if it fails to meet legal requirements, includes false documentation, or violates the constitutional right of religious freedom. If the ministry rejects an application, religious groups may appeal to the CLR within 30 days of receiving the ministry's decision. Religious groups may register as religious corporations and receive tax-exempt status. Registered groups have the right to minister in prisons, hospitals, and military facilities; provide religious teaching in public schools; access broadcasting time on public television and radio; and receive national recognition of religious holidays. The government certifies religious ministers, who receive all the benefits of the social security system. Chaplaincies for military services, prisons, and hospitals are state-funded positions open to all registered religious groups, although chaplains are predominantly Catholic. A taxpayer may allocate 5 percent of income tax payments to any registered religious group. Religious groups may also register as unincorporated associations or private corporations, which allows them to receive the same benefits granted to religious corporations. The same process for registering as unincorporated associations or private corporations applies to religious corporations. There are no practical differences between them, other than internal administration. Unregistered religious groups are not subject to penalties and may practice their religion but do not receive the benefits associated with registration. By law, religious groups registered in the country for at least 30 years or internationally recognised for 60 years may obtain the higher registration status of a "religion settled in the country." To show they qualify for this status, religious groups must demonstrate an "organised social presence" for the required length of time. These groups receive government subsidies based on the number of their members; may conclude "mutual interest" agreements with the state on issues such as education, culture, or other forms of cooperation; and may celebrate marriages that are recognised by the state legal system. The government has mutual interest agreements with Jewish and Islamic religious bodies and a concordat with the Holy See that serves the same function for the Catholic Church. The CLR is an independent, consultative body to parliament and the government, established by law. Although the CLR has attempted to include representatives from a range of religious denominations, new and alternative religions remain excluded from having a voice through this forum.

Key restriction tools imposed: excessive informational requirements, it is essential that bilateral cooperation agreements with the Portuguese state are made available to all religious groups, religion settled in the country (including ambiguous qualifications and longevity quotas), subsidiary and affiliated organisations with a religious groups must undergo separate registration procedures if they are not registered when their parent organisation is registered.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; broadcasting subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Reorganise the CLR as a recognition agency independent of government control yet retaining the authority of government in matters of religious freedom and religious recognition; revoke the existence of vertical recognition and longevity quotas.

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Qatar, State of

2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); state privilege (Wahhabism); blasphemy laws only protect the Abrahamic religions Christianity, Islam and Judaism; theism is affirmed in the monarchical and ministerial oaths.**

Human rights instruments: Qatar is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Qatar did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all non-Islamic religious groups are required to register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to legally conduct "basic religious activities" in the country. To obtain an official presence in the country, expatriate non-Muslim religious groups must register with the MFA. Registered groups may hold bank accounts in the organisation's name, apply for property to build worship spaces (or have already built structures, such as private villas, recognised as worship spaces), import religious texts such as Bibles or Qurans, and publish religious newsletters or flyers for internal distribution. Unregistered entities are unable to open accounts, solicit funds, worship in private spaces legally, acquire religious texts from outside the country, publish religiously themed newsletters or pamphlets, or legally hire staff. According to the law, unregistered religious groups (i.e., those not registered or under the patronage of one of the registered groups) that engage in worship activities are illegal, and members of those groups are subject to deportation. The law restricts public worship for non-Islamic faiths. It prohibits non-Muslim religious groups from displaying religious symbols, which includes banning Christian congregations from advertising religious services or placing crosses outdoors where they are visible to the public. The law criminalises proselytising on behalf of an organisation, society, or foundation of any religion other than Islam and provides for punishment of up to 10 years in prison. Proselytising on one's own accord for any religion other than Islam may result in a sentence of up to seven years' imprisonment. The law calls for two years' imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 riyals ($2,700) for possession of written or recorded materials or items that support or promote missionary activity. The government regulates the publication, importation, and distribution of all religious books and materials. The government reviews, censors, or bans foreign newspapers, magazines, films, and books for objectionable sexual, religious, and political content. Registered religious groups may publish newsletters without government censorship but may only distribute them internally within their respective communities. Public bookstores are not allowed to sell Bibles. To import religious materials, groups must submit one copy to the Ministry of Culture and receive written approval before making large orders or risk having the entire shipment confiscated. The only religions registered to have their own places of worship are Islam and Christianity. All mosques and Islamic institutions in the country, including Shia husseiniyas (congregation halls), must be registered with the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (MEIA). The law designates the MEIA minister as the final authority for approving Islamic religious centers. The MFA approves Christian churches in coordination with the private office of the Emir. The Office of the Secretary General of the MFA, working in coordination with the director of the MFA's Human Rights Department, is responsible for handling church affairs.

Key restriction tools imposed: criminalisation of unregistration (illegal for unregistered groups to hold religious services and to import their literature), religion by default, state definition of religion, restrictive system of patronage in which groups must belong to a patron organisation to operate legally, state-sanctioned religious organisations, strict state regulation of religious activity (e.g. the state oversees construction of mosques, hiring of imams, and provides guidance for sermons), unofficial prohibition of the Baha'i Faith, vertical recognition (Islam state religion, recognised groups and unrecognised groups; a form of verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal to convert from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; preapproval required); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; both public and private non-Islamic forms are illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; the only religions allowed places of worship are Islam and Christianity); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted; preapproval required); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present apparatus that censoriously restricts religious activity; repeal the series of laws that censor non-Islamic religion and belief; revoke the rule of mandatory registration for non-Islamic groups; to become Receptive, establish a recognition system that is inclusive of at least all established or traditional belief systems and be able to bestow existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously and at different levels of activity; to become Dynamic, this system would need to also be inclusive of NRMs or non-traditional belief systems.

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Romania



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Romania is a secular state; state privilege (Romanian Orthodox Church); theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Romania is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Romania was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Romania did not vote on the UDHR; Romania is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although religious groups are not mandated by the government to register, groups that do not register or fail to achieve the criteria for registration are not able to engage in activities classified as 'basic religious activities' by RoRB standards such as importing and publishing religious literature and proselytising. It is claimed that unregistered groups may still practice their beliefs in both private and public settings although the logistics and limitations of this without resulting in proselytism or propagation remain unclear. Registration is handled by the Registry of Religious Associations. Registered groups are categorised into a three-tiered system, all of which constitute religious designations and from the highest to the lowest amount of benefits include 'religious denomination' to 'religious association' to 'religious group'. Organisations in the top two tiers are legal entities, while 'religious groups' are not. Civil society associations established under separate provisions of the law governing associations and foundations may also engage in religious activities and have the status of legal entities. Additional organisations seeking recognition as religious denominations must demonstrate 12 years of continuous activity after 2006, the effective date of the law. A religious association is then eligible to apply for the status of religious denomination if it has a membership of at least 0.1 percent of the population as counted in the most recent census (approximately 20,120 persons). The law defines a religious association as an organisation of at least 300 citizens who share and practice the same faith and has attained legal status through registration with the Registry of Religious Associations in the office of the clerk of the court where the main branch of the association is located. To register, religious associations must submit to the government their members' personal data (e.g., names, addresses, personal identification numbers, and signatures), which the law says the government may not share with other public institutions or use in any other way. To operate as religious associations, organisations also require approval from the National Secretariat for Religious Denominations, which is under the authority of the Office of the Prime Minister. The law defines a religious group as a group of individuals sharing the same beliefs. Religious groups do not have to register to practice their religion and do not need approval from the national secretariat to operate. Civil society associations engaged in religious activities function like secular associations and foundations; however, they do not receive the same benefits as religious denominations or religious associations. These associations do not require approval from the National Secretariat for Religious Denominations to operate. Their registration falls under the provisions of law governing the establishment of foundations, associations, and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), which require a minimum membership of three individuals. Such civil society associations are not required to submit members' personal data. Religious denominations are eligible for state financial and other support. They have the right to teach religion classes in public schools, receive government funds to build places of worship, partially pay clergy salaries with state funds, broadcast religious programming on radio and television, and apply for broadcasting licences for their own stations. Under the law, the amount of state funding a denomination receives is determined by the number of adherents reported in the most recent census, as well as by "the religious denomination's actual needs," which the law does not define. Religious associations do not receive government funding and do not have the right to teach religion in public schools, but both they and religious denominations receive tax exemptions on income and buildings used for religious, educational, or other social purposes. Religious groups do not receive either government funding or tax exemptions. Both religious denominations and religious associations may own or rent property, publish or import religious literature, proselytise, establish and operate schools or hospitals, own cemeteries, and receive tax exemptions on income and buildings used for religious, educational, or other social purposes. Religious groups have no legal status to engage in such activities; however, they may practice their religious beliefs, including in public. Civil society associations engaged in religious activities may engage in religious worship and own cemeteries. While they do not receive the same tax exemptions or other benefits granted to religious denominations and religious associations, they may receive the tax advantages and other benefits accruing to civil society associations and foundations. The law allows religious workers from legally recognised religious organisations to enter and remain in the country under an extended-stay visa. Visa applicants must receive approval by the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs and submit evidence they represent religious organisations legally established in the country. The secretariat may extend such visas for up to five years. There is no quota or other limit on the total number of visas for foreign religious workers. Only clergy members of recognised religious denominations may be hired by the government as military or prison chaplains. Regulations state that clergy members of religious associations may be granted access to prisons on a case-by-case basis in certain conditions. There are no similar regulations for religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: different registration procedures exist for different categories of religious groups each of which also possess different benefits of registration, excessive informational requirements (including having to submit the personal data of members), longevity quota, membership quota (300 citizens), onerous registration procedures, vertical recognition (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration for propagational use); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a reorganised recognition system that is based on horizontal recognition rather than vertical; establish a recognition agency that would manage the reorganised recognition system in a way that is independent of the government; ongoing discrimination and harassment against religious minorities should be resolve through more sophisticated means of religious education, mutual recognition of religion and belief, and government campaigns supporting diversity and religious pluralism; revoke the restriction tools identified in the current registration system.

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Russian Federation



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Russia is a secular state; state privilege (Russian Orthodox Church); Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism are recognised in law as Russia's traditional religions; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Russia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Russia abstained from the UNDRIP; Russia did not vote on the UDHR; Russia is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious groups must notify the regional Ministry of Justice of details of its activities concurrently as the necessary precursor to mandatory registration. Vertical registration system – there exists three categories for religious associations with varying degrees of legal status and privileges. These designations are "religious groups", "local religious organisations" (LROs), and "centralised religious organisations" (CROs). A 1997 law on religion gives the state extensive control and makes it difficult for new or independent groups to operate. A "religious group" is the most basic unit and does not require registration with the government. When a group first begins its activities, however, it must notify authorities, typically the regional ministry of justice, of the location of its activity, its rites and ceremonies, and its leader(s) and members. A religious group may conduct worship services and rituals and teach religion to its members with requisite notification to authorities. It does not have legal status to open a bank account, own property, issue invitations to foreign guests, publish literature, receive tax benefits, or conduct worship services in prisons, state-owned hospitals, or the armed forces. To hold services, a religious group may use property bought by its members for the group's use, residential property owned or rented by its members, or public spaces rented by its members. An LRO may register with the MOJ if it has at least 10 citizen members who are 18 or older and are permanently residing in the region where the LRO applies to register. LROs have legal status and may open bank accounts, own property, issue invitation letters to foreign guests, publish literature, receive tax benefits, and conduct worship services in prisons, hospitals, and the armed forces. CROs may register with the ministry at the regional or federal level by combining at least three LROs of the same denomination. To register as an LRO or CRO, an association must provide the following: a list of the organisation's founders and governing body with addresses and "internal passport" data (the mandatory identity document for all citizens older than the age of 14 residing in the country); the organisation's charter; the minutes of the founding meeting; certification from the CRO (in the case of LROs); a description of the organisation's doctrine, practices, history, and attitudes toward family, marriage, and education; the organisation's legal address; a certificate of payment of government dues; and the charter or registration papers of the governing body in the case of organisations whose main offices are located abroad. Authorities may deny registration for reasons including incorrect paperwork, failure to meet different administrative requirements, national security reasons, or placement on the list of extremist or terrorist organisations. Denial of registration may be appealed in court. By law, CROs and LROs receiving funding from abroad must report an account of their activities, a list of leaders, the source of foreign funding, and plans for how the organisation intends to use the foreign funds or property obtained through foreign funding. Reports are annual by default, but the MOJ may require additional ad hoc reports. LROs and CROs may invite foreign citizens to carry out professional religious activities. LROs and CROs may produce, acquire, export, import, and distribute religious literature in printed, audio, or video format, as well as "other religious items." The Expert Religious Studies Council, a committee established by the MOJ to advise it on religious groups, has wide powers to investigate religious organisations. Some of the council's powers include reviewing organisations' activities and literature and determining whether an organisation is "extremist." The law provides several examples of extremist activities, such as "incitement to violence," but does not precisely define how organisations or religious materials may be classified as "extremist." The council also advises the MOJ on the issue of granting religious organisation status to a religious group. Foreign religious organisations (those created outside of the country under foreign laws) have the right to open offices for representational purposes, either independently or as part of religious organisations previously established in the country, but they may not form or found their own religious organisations in the country and may not operate houses of worship. By law, the government may designate an international religiously affiliated organisation or foreign religious group "undesirable." The designation allows the closure of foreign and international organisations on the grounds of "presenting a threat to the foundation of the constitutional order of the Russian Federation, the defence capability of the country or the security of the state." The designation may also lead to fines or jail time for organisation members.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad grounds for deregistration and dissolution of groups is likely to be misused against groups unfavoured by the state, broad grounds for the denial of registration are also likely to be misused against unfavoured groups, excessive informational requirements, many "basic religious activities" require registration to be conducted legally, membership quota, non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than the Russian Orthodox Church, preapproval, state definition of religion, state supervision, vertical registration is in effect (verticalism) in which there exists three separate categories of registered religious groups. The Supreme Court has banned the activities of several religious organisations on the grounds of "extremism" and "terrorism," including a regional branch of Falun Gong, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Nurdzhular (a Russification of the Turkish for "followers of Said Nursi"), Tablighi Jamaat, and the Fayzrakhmani Islamic community. These organisations are on the Federal List of Extremist Organisations or the Federal List of Terrorist Organisations. Designations as extremist or terrorist organisations may be appealed in court.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration; prohibited for unfavoured groups); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present abuse of recognition and registration that are used roundly to restrict religious activity; establish a reorganised recognition system that is inclusive of all belief systems and their derivatives; remove state privilege for the Russian Orthodox Church, especially to disable its political power and its power to influence laws on religious groups; revoke restriction tools and related policies identified as part of this report that unjustly control religious activity.

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Rwanda, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Rwanda is a secular state; theism is affirmed in all presidential, ministerial and military oaths.**

Human rights instruments: Rwanda is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Rwanda was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Rwanda did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups and their affiliate non-profit organisations and individual congregations register with the government to conduct any operations in the country legally. Registration is handled by the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB). According to the law, a religious group or NGO must submit the following to obtain legal status: an application letter addressed to the RGB; notarised statutes governing its organisation; the address of its head office and the names of its legal representative and deputy, their duties, full address, and criminal records; a document certifying the legal representative and deputy were appointed in accordance with its statutes; a brief notarised statement explaining its doctrine; a notarised declaration of the legal representatives of the organisation of consent to the responsibilities assigned to them; notarised minutes of the group's general assembly that established the organisation, approved its statutes, and appointed members of its organs; a notarised document describing the organisation's annual action plan and source of funding; a document indicating the building or meeting space meets the requirements of the building code of the area of operation; a letter issued by district authorities agreeing to collaborate with the organisation; a partnership document issued by an umbrella organisation of the organisation's choosing; and proof of payment of a non-refundable application fee. The law states the RGB must either issue a certificate of legal personality within 60 days of the date of receipt of the application or, in case of denial, send a written notice explaining the reasons for the denial within 30 days of the date of receipt of the application. Under the law, FBOs that held legal personality as of September 10, 2018, when the law was passed, were not required to reapply but had to harmonise their functioning and statutes with the current law and submit the revised statutes to the RGB within 12 months of the law's enactment. Under the law, if the RGB denies a group's application for legal status, the group may reapply when the reason for denial no longer exists. The law stipulates preachers with supervisory responsibilities must possess a degree in religious studies from an institution of higher learning or any other degree with a valid certificate in religious studies issued by a recognised institution. The law also requires a religious group's or NGO's legal representative to hold a degree from an institution of higher learning. The law states persons required to hold an academic degree shall have five years from the date of the law's enactment to comply with the requirement. The law regulates public meetings and states any person who holds a meeting or demonstration in a public place without prior authorisation is subject to eight days' to six months' imprisonment, a fine of 100,000 to one million Rwandan francs ($94-$943), or both. Penalties increase if the illegal meeting or demonstration is found to have threatened security, public order, or health. The law states religious sermons must be delivered in designated facilities that meet the requirements of the law, and that an FBO intending to organise a special public gathering must seek authorisation from the competent authority.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive informational requirements are requested as part of registration procedures, fines and imprisonment for unauthorised public gatherings, restrictive qualifications are required for preachers and religious leaders.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Repeal laws and policies unduly and inappropriately restricting reasonable religious activity; revoke the rule of mandatory registration; establish a revitalised recognition system that has capacities for both legal registration and existential recognition, provisions which should be extended to all belief systems, and offered at multiple levels of activity; to become Dynamic, the Rwandan government would need to establish a recognition agency that would manage the newly established recognition system independently from government (achieved by the government's relinquishment of its control of the agency following its establishment and its bestowal of state authority).

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Conditions of state RoRB

Saint Christopher and Nevis, Federation of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Saint Kitts and Nevis is a secular state**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Saint Kitts and Nevis is partied to the UNCRC; Saint Kitts and Nevis is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Saint Kitts and Nevis was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Saint Kitts and Nevis did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not require religious groups to register with the government. Religious groups that do register will become part of a database of contacts through which the government disseminates information on policies relevant to religious affairs. Registration is handled by the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Registration also allows religious groups to act as charities and to import religious items duty-free.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish procedures for existential recognition distinguished from those legal registration; develop all unstructured areas of the registration system.

Saint Lucia



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Saint Lucia is a secular state**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Saint Lucia is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Saint Lucia signed both the ICCPR and the ICESCR but has not ratified either; Saint Lucia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional registration – access to registration is restricted to religious groups that have at least 250 citizen members. The Ministry of Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment is responsible for religious affairs and implements the government's religious policy. To register, groups must provide contact information, their establishment date and history, declaration of belief, number of members, location of meeting place, and income sources. FBOs are encouraged to seek incorporation as a bona fide nonprofit organisation under the Companies Act. Registered groups are eligible to receive associated benefits. Unregistered groups may or may not have recognition status with the government. An unregistered group that submits a "notification of existence," which includes identifying the group's leadership, will receive correspondence acknowledging the group's existence. After receiving the notification of existence, a group is then able to incorporate under the Companies Act. After incorporation, the entity becomes a legal person for taxation purposes including for land registration and deeds of sale. Registration costs 500 Eastern Caribbean dollars ($190). After registration with the ministry and incorporation as a legal entity, a religious group may apply for concessions, including duty-free concessions on certain imported goods, departure tax and ticket tax waivers from the Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority, and exemption from work permits. Formal government registration also allows registered religious groups legally to register births, marriages, and deaths officiated by religious leaders. The government's registration policy defines the process of obtaining work and labour permits for missionaries. Immigration authorities grant work permits for individuals entering the country to conduct missionary work in exchange for the payment of a weekly fee of 200 Eastern Caribbean dollars ($74). Providing that they abide by the law, foreign missionaries face no other restrictions or obligations.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive informational requirements are vulnerable to being misused against groups unfavoured by the state, registration costs $190 which exceeds the $100 threshold set by RoRB standards, the registration benefit of "legal marriage officiation" is impermissible to RoRB standards, foreign missionaries must pay a $74-a-week fee to perform proselytising activities, according to some registered groups registration is not a guarantee of freedom to perform functions or to receive benefits promised by registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To become Receptive, establish a revitalised recognition system that can provide both existential recognition in addition to legal registration simultaneously, to all belief systems and their derivatives, and at different levels of recognition; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that has the capacity to manage the re-established recognition system in a way that is independent of the government; ongoing discrimination levied towards Rastafarians and Muslims are issues that should be resolved through greater religious education and mutual recognition; revoke excessive informational requirements and abolish the conditional mandatory registration order.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government to conduct what RoRB standards define as 'basic religious activities'. Registration is handled by the Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation, Ecclesiastical Affairs, and Information. The main benefit of registering is tax exemptions and the category in which religious or belief organisations are registered is the religious designation 'nonprofit religious institution'. Religious organisations may also register under the secular designation 'corporation', requiring an application to the same ministry and the issuance of a certificate of incorporation by parliament.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that bestows both existential recognition and legal registration, to all belief systems, and at multiple levels of operation; establish a recognition agency independent of government to manage the recognition system in order to be classified Dynamic.

Samoa, Independent State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Samoa is partied to the ICCPR and the UNCRC; Samoa is not partied to the ICESCR; Samoa abstained from voting on the UNDRIP but has since endorsed it; Samoa did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as 'basic religious activities'. Registration is handled by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Labour. There are two secular designations for religious or belief organisations to register under: 'charitable trust' or 'incorporated society'. Registration is free. Becoming a registered entity entitles groups to receive tax exemptions and legal status. Unregistered religious groups may not formally buy property or pay employees. Individuals or groups may establish a place of worship on community or private land but must obtain approval from the extended family that has claims to the land, as well as from the village council.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, non-recognition for any religion other than Christianity.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that has the capacity for both existential recognition and legal registration bestowed nationwide, is offered to all belief systems and their derivatives and is bestowed at multiple levels of activity; revoke laws providing undue powers to village councils and the policy of the non-recognition of any religion other than Christianity; establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system independent of government to become dynamic.

San Marino, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **San Marino is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: San Marino is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; San Marino did not vote on the UDHR; San Marino is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it in order to conduct what RoRB standards from the RFSRB classify as "basic religious activities." Existential recognition and legal registration are amalgamated in the legislation as the term "official recognition" is used in reference to the outcome of registration. To obtain legal recognition, religious organisations are required to submit to the government evidence of non-profit activities and annual reports, which include their budget, and the procedure required by the association for its approval. The government may periodically audit and inspect organisations, require them to submit additional documentation, and investigate any complaints from organisation members or third parties. The Holy See signed a bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) with the Sammarinese government that granted Catholic chaplains the right to deliver spiritual assistance to hospital patients, retirement home residents, and prison inmates. The BCA also established a fund drawn from citizens' voluntary income tax allocations to support the Catholic Church's humanitarian, welfare, and social activities as well as the maintenance of religious sites. The law allows taxpayers to allocate 0.3 percent of their income tax payments to the Catholic Church or to other religious or secular groups recognised as nonprofit organisations. Taxpayers need not be members of a group to earmark a contribution. Religious organisations must be legally recognised in the country to receive this benefit.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, monitorial requirements are conducted "periodically" but RoRB standards state that such requirements should only be conducted at the highest frequency "annually".

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

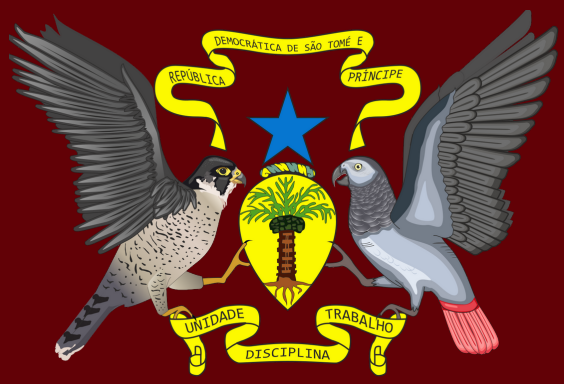
Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that is able to bestow existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously as well as to all belief systems equally and at multiple levels of activity; establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to deal with the revitalised recognition system.

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Conditions of state RoRB

São Tomé and Príncipe, Democratic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **São Tomé and Príncipe is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: São Tomé and Príncipe is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; São Tomé and Príncipe did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious groups are mandated to register with the government to exist legally in the country. If a religious group does not register, it is subject to fines and possible expulsion if it is a foreign religious group. To register, a group must send a letter requesting authorisation to the Ministry of Justice, Public Administration, and Human Rights. Once the group obtains authorisation, it must submit the following documents to a notary public: the ministry's approval letter; the group's statutes; the minutes or report from a meeting attended by at least 500 representatives of the group and signed by its president and secretary; copies of the national identity cards of those who attended this meeting; a list of board members; and a certificate from the Registrar's Office attesting that no existing organisation has the same name. After a payment of 1,000 dobras ($43) for notarial fees, an announcement is published in the government gazette, and the group may then operate fully as a registered group. Once registered, a religious group does not need to register again. Registered religious groups receive the same benefits, such as tax exemptions, as registered nonprofit organisations. There is no government data available on the number of registered religious groups in the country. In August 2022, the Holy See established a bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) with the government defining the legal framework of relations between the Catholic Church and the state.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, deportation of foreign nationals engaged in unregistered religious activities, excessive informational requirements (the national identity cards of at least 500 members), fines for those participation in activities organised by unregistered religious groups, membership and signature quota (at least 500 members who attended the group's launch meeting), nominal restriction, public objection restriction tool, secondary procedure is required to complete registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

To become Receptive, revoke present restrictive policies in the registration process such as retributions for unregistration, authorisation in preregistration, mandatory registration and membership quotas; also to achieve Receptive status, establish a revitalised recognition system that is able to bestow existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously as well as to all belief systems equally and at multiple levels of activity; to achieve Dynamic status, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to deal with the revitalised recognition system.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Caveated claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); state privilege (Wahhabism); the Quran and the Sunna are the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Saudi Arabia is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Saudi Arabia is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Saudi Arabia abstained from voting on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – because no religions other than Islam are allowed to formally operate in Saudi Arabia, there are currently no mechanisms proscribed by the government for the registration of religious groups in the Kingdom. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Call and Guidance (MOIA) vets, employs, and supervises Sunni Muslim clerics. Those who preach at government-owned mosques are government employees who receive a monthly stipend. The MOIA permits only government-employed clerics to deliver sermons and vets the sermons in advance. The MOIA must approve clerics travelling abroad to proselytise and they operate under MOIA supervision. The stated purpose of this regulation is to limit the ability of religious scholars to travel or to preach overseas and to prevent the actual or apparent interference by clerics in the domestic affairs of other states. The government requires noncitizen legal residents to carry an identity card containing a religious designation of “Muslim” or “non-Muslim.” Some residency cards, including some issued during the year, indicate other religious designations, such as “Christian.” The counterterrorism law criminalises, among other things, “calling for atheist thought in any form or calling into question the fundamentals of the Islamic religion.” It criminalises “anyone who challenges, either directly or indirectly, the religion or justice of the King or Crown Prince.” The law also bans publications that “contradict the provisions of Islamic law,” and other acts including non- Islamic public worship, public display of non-Islamic religious symbols, conversion by a Muslim to another religion, and proselytising by a non-Muslim. The press law requires all online newspapers and bloggers to obtain a licence from the ministry. The law bans publishing anything “contradicting sharia, inciting disruption, serving foreign interests that contradict national interests, and damaging the reputation of the Grand Mufti, members of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, or senior government officials.”

Key restriction tools imposed: any non-Islamic religious public expressions or activities are strictly prohibited, hypervertical recognition system is in place, Islamic new religious movements are also likely to face prohibitions of their activities, non-recognition for any non-Sunni religion or denomination, the missionary work of clerics must be approved and supervised by the MOIA, non-citizen legal residents are required to carry an identity card that displays either their religious affiliation or simply the designations "Muslim" or "non-Muslim". The government continued to prohibit the public practice of any non-Islamic religion. In practice, there was increased but still limited tolerance of private, non-Islamic religious gatherings and public displays of non-Islamic religious symbols, and religious practitioners at variance with the government-promoted form of Sunni Islam remained vulnerable to detention, harassment, and, for noncitizens, deportation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal to convert from Islam; being Muslim is intertwined with citizenship); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic materials are illegal for propagational use); **monasticism** (not free; illegal); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; illegal); **pastoral services** (not free; illegal); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; non-Islamic forms are illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; non-Islamic expression is illegal); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; non-Islamic instruction illegal); **religious literature** (not free; distribution of non-Islamic literature illegal); **religious and worship services** (not free; non-Islamic services highly restricted); **religious trade** (not free; non-Islamic forms illegal).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present apparatus of laws persecuting non-Muslims and non-Islamic religious activity; establish a recognition system that is inclusive of all belief systems and is able to provide both existential recognition and legal registration; revoke the present hegemony of the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam that no only subjugates non-Wahhabi forms of Islam as well as all non-Islamic belief systems.

158 Conditions of state RoRB

Senegal, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Senegal is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Senegal is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Senegal did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration (tapered application) – although the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government, to receive "financial contributions from private sources" including donations requires registration as does the ability to "conduct business" which makes registration procedures mandatory. There are no stated penalties for unregistered groups which makes punishment subject to arbitrary enforcement. Registration is handled by the Ministry of Interior and religious groups have the opportunity to register under the secular designation 'association'. To register, organisations must provide documentation showing they have existed for at least two years; a mission statement; bylaws; a list of goals, objectives, activities, or projects implemented; and proof of previous and future funding. They must also pass a background check. Registration enables a group to conduct business, own property, establish a bank account, receive financial contributions from private sources, and receive applicable tax exemptions. There is no formal penalty for failure to register other than ineligibility to receive these benefits. Registered religious groups and non-profit organisations are exempt from taxation on donations received. The law requires associations, including religious groups and NGOs affiliated with them, to obtain authorisation from the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection to operate. This second registration requirement allows the government to monitor organisations operating in the social development field and to identify any programs these organisations implement to ensure they operate according to the terms of their registration. Foreign NGOs, including those affiliated with religious groups, must also obtain authorisation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To maintain their authorisation, each association and domestic and foreign NGOs must submit an annual report, including a financial report, and activity reports every three months which the ministries use to monitor for irregularities and potential threats against national security. In addition, all NGOs must also be part of the government-NGO Strategic Partnership Council, chaired by the Prime Minister.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, dual registration (with both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection; for foreign groups, there is a third registration procedure with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs required), excessive informational requirements (proof of funding) are intertwined with a longevity quota (at least two years), secondary and tertiary procedures, there is an ad hoc system for state funding, monitorial.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To attain Receptive status, revoke two-step and three-step authorisations for religious groups and foreign religious groups; also, dissolve the implementation of any longevity quotas; also to attain Receptive status, establish a revitalised recognition system that has within provisions for both existential recognition and legal registration, is inclusive of all belief systems, and can be apply recognition and registration at multiple levels of activity and operation; to attain Dynamic status, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to manage the recognition system.

159 Conditions of state RoRB

Serbia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Serbia is a secular state; state privilege (Serbian Orthodox Church); Catholicism, Evangelical Christian Church, Islam, Judaism, Reformed Christian Church, Serbian Orthodox Church, and Slovak Evangelical Church are state-recognised as traditional religions.**

Human rights instruments: Serbia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Serbia did not vote on the UDHR; Serbia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that religious groups register with it, in order for a religious group to conduct the "basic religious activity" of operating property for religious services, registration is required makes the procedures pseudo-mandatory in nature. The seven "traditional" religions are automatically registered in the Register of Churches and Religious Communities. In addition to these groups, the government grants traditional status, solely in Vojvodina Province, to the Diocese of Dacia Felix of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which has its seat in Romania and an administrative seat in the city of Vrsac, in Vojvodina. The law also grants the seven traditional religious groups, but not other registered religious groups, the right to receive value-added tax refunds on all purchases enumerated under law and to provide chaplain services to military personnel. To obtain registration, a group must submit the following: the names, identity numbers, copies of notarised identity documents, and signatures of at least 100 citizen members; its statutes and a summary of its religious teachings, ceremonies, religious goals, and basic activities; and information on its sources of funding. The law prohibits registration if an applicant group's name includes part of the name of an existing registered group. The Ministry of Justice maintains the Register of Churches and Religious Communities and responds to registration applications. If the Ministry of Justice rejects a registration application, the religious group may appeal the decision in court. The law does not require religious groups to register, but it treats unregistered religious organisations as informal groups that do not receive any of the legal benefits afforded registered religious groups. Only registered religious groups may build new places of worship, own property, apply for property restitution, or receive state funding for their activities. Registration is also required to open bank accounts and hire staff. Registered clerics of registered groups are entitled to government support for social and health insurance and a retirement plan. The law also exempts registered groups from property and administrative taxes and from filing annual financial reports. According to the constitution, the Constitutional Court may ban a religious community for activities infringing on the right to life or health, the rights of the child, the right to personal and family integrity, public safety, and public order, or if it incites religious, national, or racial intolerance. The constitution also states the Constitutional Court may ban an association that incites religious hatred. The Directorate for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Communities manages all matters pertaining to the cooperation of the state with churches and religious communities. These include assistance to national minorities in protecting the religious traditions integral to their cultural and ethnic identity, cooperation between the state and SOC dioceses abroad, support for religious education, and support for and protection of the legal standing of churches and religious communities. The Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue is tasked with combating misperception and hate, including against religious communities, through organising roundtables, discussions, and other forms of dialogue, public messaging, and assessing related legislation. Under the law, "church" is a term reserved for Christian religious groups, while the term "religious community" refers to non-Christian groups and to some Christian entities. The Islamic community is divided between the Islamic Community of Serbia, with its seat in Belgrade, and the Islamic Community in Serbia, with its seat in the city of Novi Pazar, in the southwest Sandzak region. Both Islamic communities are registered with the government and may conduct most normal business, such as receiving financial assistance from the government, receiving healthcare and pension benefits for clergy, maintaining tax-exempt status, holding bank accounts, owning property, and employing staff. Neither group, however, has absolute authority over matters regarding the entire Islamic community.

Key restriction tools imposed: automatic registration for groups belonging to recognised religions, excessive informational requirements, legislation implies that unregistered religious groups are mandated to provide the government with annual financial reports to remain legal, nominal restriction, signature quota, weaponisation of the term "traditional" to exclude new religious movements and minority religions.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantle the present system that adopts partial recognition; establish a revitalised recognition system that bestows existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives; establish a recognition agency that manages this recognition system in a way that is independent of the government's control; reduce the intrusiveness of informational requirements.

160 Conditions of state RoRB

Seychelles, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Seychelles is a secular state; Anglicanism, Baha'i Faith, Catholicism, Islam, and Seventh-day Adventism are recognised; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Seychelles is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Seychelles was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Seychelles did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – all religious groups are required to register with the government under the secular designations 'corporation' or 'association'. In March 2022, the government announced a directive that religious groups must provide up-to-date lists of their membership to a centralised government database and financial information to the government's Financial Intelligence Unit. To register, a group must submit to the Registrar of Associations its name, location, rules, and list of assets; the name, occupation, and addresses of officers and at least seven members; and the resolution appointing its officers. A minimum of seven members is required to register an association. To receive tax benefits, including tax exemptions on the importation of goods and for projects that are considered to advance the country's socioeconomic goals and meet certain other criteria, religious groups must also register with the Finance Ministry. The government recognises the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Islamic groups (Quran and Sunnah Society of Seychelles, Islamic Society of Seychelles, and Islamic Foundation of Seychelles), and the Baha'i local spiritual assembly through individual acts of incorporation. Although no penalties are prescribed for unregistered groups, only those registered as corporate bodies or associations have legal status and certain rights, such as to airtime for religious programming on the national broadcast media, Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), or permission to provide spiritual counsel in prison. In March 2022, the government amended the law regulating religious groups and associations (the Registration Act) to introduce new criteria for registering heads of religious groups and to establish mechanisms to detect financial fraud, terrorist financing, and money laundering through religious groups. The Seychelles Interfaith Council (SIFCO) supported the amendment to the Registration Act out of concern that without tighter regulations, fraudulent religious groups could too easily register as associations. The law prohibits religious groups from obtaining commercial radio or television licences. The SBC provides airtime to registered religious groups on national radio and on national television for a daily early morning program and to broadcast religious services upon request. Since June, the SBC's policy grants equal access to radio and television programming for all registered faith-based groups. Religious groups may publish newspapers.

Key restriction tools imposed: broadcasting is made a registration benefit despite being a basic religious activity whose free conduct should not need be dependent upon a group having gained registered status, excessive informational requirements, membership quota (7 members), preapproval, secondary procedure as part of the registration process.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; broadcasting is subject to government preapproval); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Opportunities to gain existential recognition must be expanded to all belief systems and religions and their respective communities; resolve some of the identified persistent issues within the present system; to become classified Receptive, establish a reorganised recognition system that bestows existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives; to become classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that manages this recognition system in a way that is independent of the government's control.

Sierra Leone, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Sierra Leone is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Sierra Leone is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Sierra Leone did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order for groups to conduct what RoRB standards classify as "basic religious activities". The Ministry of Social Welfare is responsible for religious affairs, including the registration of religious organisations. Groups seeking to register must complete forms and provide proof of police clearance, proof of funding, a list of partners, and annual work plans to qualify for tax exemptions and duty concessions. The registration must be renewed annually. There is no penalty for organisations that choose not to file for registration, but registration is required to obtain tax exemptions and waiver benefits when importing religious materials. Religious organisations intending to engage in charitable activities are required to establish a separate unit to carry out such functions and to register that entity as an NGO with the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organisations. Religious groups are also able to register with the Inter Religious Council, the umbrella NGO responsible for inter-religious affairs in the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, annual reregistration to maintain registered status and its benefits, a secondary procedure is part of the registration process.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To be classified Receptive, establish differentiated provisions for existential recognition and legal registration by reorganising the present recognition system so that it has the capacity to make such provisions; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government control to manage the recognition system; revoke the secondary procedure in the registration process and the annual reregistration order.

Singapore, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Singapore is a secular state; Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism are recognised by the state.**

Human rights instruments: Singapore is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; Singapore is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Singapore did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional registration – the law mandates all religious groups that have exceeded ten members to register with the government; pseudo-mandatory registration – a registration benefit is listed as to "hold public meetings" and to conduct pastoral services in prisons which are classified 'basic religious activities' and should therefore not be subject to registration. Registration confers legal identity, which allows registered groups to own property, hold public meetings, and conduct financial transactions. Registered religious groups may apply to establish and maintain charitable and humanitarian institutions, which enables them to solicit and receive funding and tax benefits, such as income tax exemptions. Registered societies are subject to potential deregistration by the government on a variety of grounds, such as having purposes prejudicial to public peace, welfare, or good order. Deregistration makes it impossible to maintain a legal identity as a religious group, with consequences related to owning property, conducting financial transactions, and holding public meetings. A person who acts as a member of or attends a meeting of an unregistered group may be punished with a fine of up to 5,000 SGD ($3,750), imprisonment of up to three years, or both. Prisoners, including those in solitary confinement, are allowed access to chaplains of registered religious groups. Members of unregistered or banned religious groups do not have this right. In November 2022, the government enacted amendments passed in 2019 to the MRHA. Under the law as amended, only citizens or permanent residents may fill key leadership roles in religious organisations, and religious organisations must disclose foreign donations of 10,000 Singapore dollars (SGD) ($7,500) or more and disclose any affiliation to foreign groups that may be in a position to exert influence on the organisation. Citizens must obtain a permit prior to speaking at indoor gatherings open to the public that are outside of the hearing or view of nonparticipants if the topic refers to race or religion. Indoor, private (invitation-only) events are not subject to the same restrictions. Organisers of private events, however, must prevent inadvertent access by uninvited guests or they may be cited for noncompliance with the rules regarding public gatherings. By law the government may prohibit publications that are considered objectionable because they describe, depict, express, or deal with matters of race or religion (among other things) in such a manner that the availability of the publication is likely to cause feelings of enmity, hatred, ill will, or hostility among racial or religious groups. The government may prohibit the importation of publications, including religious publications, under the law. For offences involving the publication of material deemed objectionable, an individual may be liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding 5,000 SGD ($3,750), imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both. A person in possession of a prohibited publication may be fined up to 2,000 SGD ($1,500) and imprisoned for up to 12 months for a first conviction. All written materials published by the International Bible Students Association and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, as the publishing arms of Jehovah's Witnesses, remained banned by the government. The Ministry of National Development and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) establish guidelines on land development and use of space for religious activities. The URA regulates all land usage and decides where organisations may be located; a religious group seeking a new place of worship must apply to the URA for a permit. URA guidelines regulate the use of commercially and industrially zoned space for religious activities and religious groups; they apply equally to all religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broads grounds for which deregistration may occur could easily be misused against religious groups unfavoured by the state, fines (up to $3,800) and imprisonment (up to 3 years) for those attending or leading unregistered groups, possibly inverted membership quota, prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Unification Church, state definition of religion, stringent restrictions on religious literature.

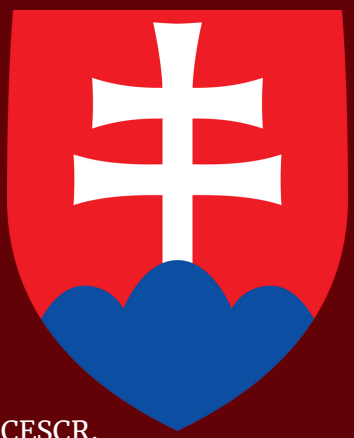
Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; conversion to prohibited religions is illegal); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration; also restricted by law); **public expression and observance** (not free; subject to registration); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present apparatus of laws restricting religious activity must take place for Singapore to rise to Restrictive status; also, crucially, reverse of all religious prohibitions (e.g. those imposed against Jehovah's Witnesses); restrictions and the use of subjective language in the legislation as a means for restriction would need to be revoked in order for the country to rise to Receptive status; restrictions on religious literature and the fines and imprisonment imposed for unregistered groups must also be abolished; establish a reorganised recognition system that extends both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives equally.

Slovak Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Slovakia is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Slovakia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Slovakia did not vote on the UDHR; Slovakia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government but because unregistered groups cannot conduct some 'basic religious activities' such as the ability to employ "spiritual leaders to perform officially recognised functions" and to perform pastoral services in prisons and hospitals makes registration pseudo-mandatory. Clergy from unregistered religious groups do not have the right to minister to their members in prisons or government hospitals. Civil functions such as weddings officiated by clergy from registered groups are recognised by the state, while those presided over by clergy from unregistered groups are not, and these couples must undergo an additional civil ceremony. Unregistered groups may apply to provide spiritual guidance to their adherents in prisons, but they have no legal recourse if their requests are denied. Unregistered groups may conduct religious services, which the government recognises as private, rather than religious, activities. Unregistered groups lack legal status and may not establish religious schools or receive government funding. The law exempts registered groups from the duty to notify public authorities in advance of organising public assemblies but does not allow this exemption for unregistered groups. According to the law, organisations seeking registration as religious groups must have a minimum of 50,000 adherents. The 50,000 persons must be adult citizens with permanent residence in the country and must submit to the Ministry of Culture an “honest declaration” attesting to their membership, knowledge of the articles of faith and basic tenets of the religion, personal identity numbers and home addresses of all members, and support for the group’s registration. All groups registered before these requirements came into effect in 2017 remained registered without having to meet the 50,000-adherent requirement; no new religious groups have attained recognition under the revised requirements. According to the law, only groups that register using the title “church” in their official name may call themselves a church, but there is no other legal distinction between registered “churches” and other registered religious groups. The Department of Church Affairs oversees relations between religious groups and the state and manages the distribution of state subsidies to religious groups and associations. The ministry may not legally intervene in the internal affairs of religious groups or direct their activities. Under the law, state subsidies to registered groups are based on the number of adherents reported in the most recent census. The state adjusts these annual subsidy payments based on inflation. A group lacking the 50,000 adult adherents required to obtain status as an official religious group may register as a civic association, which provides the legal status necessary to carry out activities such as maintaining a bank account, entering into a contract, or acquiring or renting property. In doing so, however, the group may not identify itself officially as a religious group, since the law governing registration of civic associations specifically excludes religious groups from obtaining this status. The group must also refrain from carrying out activities related to practicing religion, such as determining its own religious teachings and practices or providing spiritual services, which from a legal perspective are reserved for registered religious groups only; violators face possible dissolution by authorities. To register as a civic association, three citizens must provide their names and addresses and the name, goals, organisational structure, executive bodies, and budgetary rules of the group. A concordat with the Holy See provides the legal framework for relations among the government, the Roman Catholic Church in the country, and the Holy See. The law requires public broadcasters to allocate program time for registered religious groups but not for unregistered groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: alternative procedures to register as a civic association are provided but still with membership quota imposed and with a lesser degree of registered status bestowed, amalgamation, membership quota, nationality quota, nominal restriction, no new religious groups have successfully completed registration since the enactment of the 2017 law on religious groups, preferential treatment of preregistered groups, signature quota, unregistered religious groups are not able to conduct some pastoral activities which are classified as "basic religious activities", vertical registration system due to there existing registered religious groups, registered civic associations, and unregistered groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free; laws on importation for propagational use remain unclear); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the apparatus of laws restricting religious activity, including all the above identified restriction tools; to be classified Receptive, establish differentiated provisions for existential recognition and legal registration by reorganising the present recognition system so that it has the capacity to make such provisions; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to manage the recognition system.

Slovenia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Slovenia is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Slovenia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Slovenia did not vote on the UDHR; Slovenia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government, it does subject a religious group's performance of pastoral services in prisons, hospitals and in the military to registration which makes registration pseudo-mandatory as these are considered 'basic religious activities'; there is a separate registration procedure for NGOs affiliated with religious groups. The law enables churches and other religious groups to register with the government to obtain status as officially recognised religious entities, but it does not restrict the religious activities of unregistered religious groups. Unregistered religious groups may establish legal associations or entities to purchase property but are required to pay taxes on such property, whereas property owned by registered religious groups used for religious purposes is exempt from taxation. According to the law, the rights of registered and unregistered religious groups include autonomy in selecting their legal form and constituency, freedom to define their internal organisation and to name and define the competencies of their employees, autonomy in defining the rights and obligations of their members, latitude to participate in interconfessional organisations within the country or abroad, and freedom to construct buildings for religious purposes. Registered religious groups may provide religious services to the military, police, prisons, hospitals, and social care institutions. Registered religious groups are also eligible for rebates on value-added taxes and government co-financing of social security contributions for their religious workers. The law states religious groups have a responsibility to respect the constitution and the legal provisions on nondiscrimination. To register with the government, a religious group must submit an application to the MOC providing proof it has at least 10 adult members who are citizens or permanent residents; the name of the group, which must be clearly distinguishable from the names of other religious groups; the group's address in the country; and a copy of its official seal to be used in legal transactions. It must pay an administrative tax of €22.60 ($24). The group must also provide the names of the group's representatives in the country, a description of the foundations of the group's religious beliefs, and a copy of its organisational act. If a group wishes to apply for government co-financing of social security for clergy members, it must show it has at least 1,000 lay members for every clergy member. The government may refuse the registration of a religious group only if the group does not provide the required application materials in full or if the MOC determines the group is a "hate group" – an organisation engaging in hate crimes as defined by the penal code. By law, the MOC monitors and maintains records on registered religious communities and provides legal expertise and assistance to religious organisations. The MOC establishes and manages procedures for registration, issues documents related to the legal status of registered communities, distributes funds allocated in the government's budget for religious activities, organises discussions and gatherings of religious communities to address religious freedom concerns, and provides information to religious groups on legal provisions and regulations related to their activities. Charitable organisations connected with a religious community are unable automatically to participate in public tenders. Such organisations must first prove their NGO status to the government and then formally request consideration, as must NGOs that are not connected with religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad grounds for the denial of registration are vulnerable to being misused against religious groups unfavoured by the state, excessive informational requirements, membership quota (two different kinds are imposed for different aspects of the registration process; the lower status demands 10 adult members while the higher status demands 1,000), nationality quota, onerous registration procedure.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish separate procedures for existential recognition and legal registration; resolve identified restriction tools such as excessive informational requirements, membership quota among others; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system and its provisions for recognition and registration; this recognition agency should operate independently of the government.

Solomon Islands



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Solomon Islands is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Solomon Islands is partied to the ICESCR and the UNCRC; Solomon Islands is not partied to the ICCPR; Solomon Islands was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Solomon Islands did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with it. Religious groups must apply in writing to the Registrar of Companies for a certificate of registration. Religious groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may register under the secular designation 'charitable organisation'. To register, a group must submit the required documentation to the Registrar of Companies; the application fee of 1,250 Solomon Islands dollars (SBD) ($160) is waived for religious groups. Documentation required for the application process includes a description of the group, a list of board members, and a constitution that states how the group is governed and how members are chosen. The registrar issues a certificate when satisfied that the requirements have been met and that the nature, extent, objectives, and circumstances of the applicant are noncommercial.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition distinct from legal registration by reorganising the recognition system; revoke the rule of mandatory registration; to be classified Receptive, establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system independently of the government.

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Somalia, Federal Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Implicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Sunni Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Somalia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Somalia was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Somalia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **malregistration**

Registration policy: malregistration – guidance on how to register or what is required is inconsistent and the government has no ability to implement its registration procedures outside Mogadishu. The Federal Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs has legal authority to register religious groups. Guidance on how to register or what is required is inconsistent. The ministry has no ability to enforce such requirements outside of Mogadishu. Somaliland has no mechanism to register religious organisations and no specific requirements to register Islamic groups. Other FMS administrations have no mechanism to register religious organisations.

Recognition policy: the PFC requires the president, but not other office holders, to be Muslim.

Key restriction tools imposed: criminalisation of blasphemy and religious conversion away from Islam, informational about registration procedures is inconsistent and the government does not have the authority to provide genuine registered status, non-recognition of any religion or denomination other than Sunni Islam.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal to convert from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted or illegal); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to propagate any religion other than Islam); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present apparatus of terminally restrictive laws on religious activity including the repressive penal code that criminalises blasphemy and conversion from Islam; establish provisions for recognition and registration and make these available to all belief systems and their derivatives; establish this recognition system in a way that does not place Islam above all other belief systems and groups.

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Conditions of state RoRB

South Africa, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **South Africa is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: South Africa is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; South Africa abstained from voting on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require that religious groups register with it in order for them to conduct what RoRB standards classify as 'basic religious activities'. However, a 2016 CRL legislative proposal continues to threaten the non-mandatory nature of registration as the proposal includes making registration with the government a mandatory requirement and would establish a peer review council consisting of religious leaders to determine whether other religious groups would be given permission to operate in the country. Registered religious and other nonprofit groups may qualify as public benefit organisations, allowing them to open bank accounts and exempting them from paying income tax. To register as a public benefit organisation, groups must submit a nonprofit organisation application, including their constitution, contact information, list of officers, and documentation stating they meet a number of prescribed requirements that largely ensure accounting and tax compliance, to the provincial social development office. A group registers once with the local office and its status then applies nationwide. Once registered, the group must submit annual reports on any changes to this information, important achievements and meetings, and financial information, as well as an accountant's report. The constitution grants detained persons visitation rights with their chosen religious counsellor.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

A lack of distinction between procedures for registering religious and secular entities needs to be resolved through the differentiation of procedures for these two types of entities.

South Sudan, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **South Sudan is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: South Sudan is partied to the UNCRC; South Sudan is neither partied to the ICCPR nor to the ICESCR; South Sudan was absent during voting on UNDRIP; South Sudan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government mandates that all religious groups register with it order to conduct "basic religious activities" as defined by RoRB standards. The government requires religious groups to register with the state government where they operate. Religious groups with associated advocacy and humanitarian or development organisations must also register with the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs through the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Faith-based organisations are required to provide their constitution; a statement of faith documenting their doctrines, beliefs, objectives, and holy book; a list of executive members; and a registration fee of $3,500 ($5) (which all humanitarian organisations must pay, including faith-based ones). This requirement, however, is not strictly enforced, and many churches operate without registration. International faith-based organisations are required also to provide a copy of a previous registration with another government and a letter from the international organisation commissioning its activities in the country. The transitional constitution specifies that the regulation of religious matters within each state is the executive and legislative responsibility of the state government. It establishes the responsibility of government at all levels to protect monuments and places of religious importance from destruction or desecration. The transitional constitution allows religious groups to establish and maintain what the transitional constitution deems "appropriate" faith-based charitable or humanitarian institutions. Malregistration – ongoing interethnic and inter-religious conflict has weakened the ability for the central government to protect registered religious or belief organisations.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, secondary procedure, more qualifications required for GFOs than domestic groups which creates a discriminatory system (GFOs are required to provide proof of their successful registration with another government and a commissioning letter from the group's international headquarters), unregistered groups often go without registration despite registration being mandatory.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a reorganised recognition system that can bestow both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously and one that offers these to all belief systems equally; reduce the excessive registration fee presently imposed; revoke secondary procedures in the registration process and halt the request for more qualifications for GFOs in comparison to domestic groups.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Spain, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Spain is a secular state; state privilege (Catholicism).**

Human rights instruments: Spain is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Spain did not vote on the UDHR; Spain is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that all religious groups register it, unregistered groups cannot conduct some 'basic religious activities' including the ability to rent property for religious services. The government does not require religious groups to register, but registration confers on religious groups certain legal benefits. Groups registered in the Registry of Religious Entities maintained by the Office of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of the Presidency, Relations with Parliament, and Democratic Memory (Ministry of the Presidency) may buy, rent, and sell property, and may act as a legal entity in civil proceedings. Registration entails completing forms available on the ministry's website and providing notarised documentation of the foundational and operational statutes of the religious group, its legal representatives, territorial scope, religious purposes, and address. All persons or groups have the right to practice their religion whether or not the community of which they are members is registered as a religious entity. New religious communities may register directly with the Ministry of the Presidency, or religious associations may register on their behalf. The Jewish, Muslim and Protestant communities in the country have bilateral cooperation agreements (BCAs) with the government but their agreements do not convey the amount of benefits as those grants to the Catholic Church in its own BCA. The government maintains a bilateral agreement with the Holy See, executed in part by the Episcopal Conference of Spain. The Episcopal Conference interacts with the government on behalf of the entire Catholic community. While other religious groups are required to register each place of worship, per a 1979 agreement with the Holy See, individual Catholic dioceses and parishes are not required to register with the government. The Catholic Church is the only religious entity to which persons may voluntarily allocate 0.7 percent of their taxes. The government also has cooperation agreements with CIE, FEREDE, and FCJE. These agreements with the country's four predominant religions – Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism, and Judaism – are legally binding and provide the religious groups with certain tax exemptions and the ability to buy and sell property, open a house of worship, and conduct other legal business. The agreements also grant civil validity to weddings performed by clergy and permit the placement of teachers in schools and chaplains in hospitals, the military, and prisons. Groups with cooperation agreements are also eligible for independently administered government grants. The agreements cover legal, educational, cultural, and economic affairs; religious observance by members of the armed forces; and the military service of clergy and members of religious orders. Registered groups that wish to sign cooperation agreements with the state must first acquire notorio arraigo ("deeply rooted" or permanent) status through the Ministry of the Presidency's Office of Religious Affairs. To achieve this status, groups must have an unspecified "relevant" number of followers, a presence in the country for at least 30 years, and a "level of diffusion" in the general population that the government considers demonstrates a "social presence," which is not further defined. Groups must also submit documentation demonstrating the group is religious in nature to the Office of Religious Affairs, which maintains the Register of Religious Entities. Jehovah's Witnesses, UBE- FEBE, the Church of Jesus Christ, and the Episcopal Orthodox Assembly of Spain and Portugal are registered religions with notorio arraigo status. If the Office of Religious Affairs deems an applicant for registration a nonreligious group, the applicant may instead be included in the Register of Associations maintained by the Ministry of the Interior. Inclusion in this register grants legal status but confers no other benefits. Registration itself simply lists the association and its history in the government's database. Registration as an association is a precursor to requesting that the government deem the association to be of public benefit, which affords the same tax benefits as charities, including exemption from income tax and taxes on contributions. For such a classification, the association must be registered for two years and maintain a net positive fiscal balance. The FPC is a governmental entity attached to the Ministry of the Presidency that promotes religious freedom and diversity. It provides funding to non-Catholic religious denominations that have a cooperation agreement with the government in support of activities that promote cultural, educational, and social integration. It provides non-financial assistance to other religious groups registered with the government to increase public awareness. The foundation also promotes dialogue and rapprochement among religious groups and the integration of religion in society. It works closely with the Office of Religious Affairs. The regions of Madrid and Catalonia maintain agreements with several religious groups that have accords with the national government. These regional agreements permit activities such as providing religious assistance in hospitals and prisons under regional jurisdiction. The central government funds these services for prisons and the military, and the regional governments fund hospital services. According to the central government, these subnational agreements may not contradict the principles of the federal agreements, which take precedence. Religious groups must apply to local governments for a licence to open a place of worship or other establishments intended for public use. Requirements for licences vary from municipality to municipality. Documentation required is usually the same as for other business establishments seeking to open a venue for public use and includes information such as architectural plans and maximum capacity. Religious groups must also inform the Office of Religious Affairs after opening new places of worship. Local governments are obligated to consider requests for use of public land to open a place of worship. If a municipality decides to deny such a request after weighing factors such as availability and value added to the community, the city council must explain its decision to the requesting party.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements are dependent on authoritative decree from the president, excessive informational requirements, geographic quota, longevity quota, membership quota, onerous registration procedures, registration is a precondition for recognition (bilateral cooperation agreements), second procedure, vertical recognition system (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Make bilateral cooperation agreements available to all groups so that they may then comprise a positive and characteristically dynamic element of the Spanish system; revoke the imposition of geographic quota, longevity quota, excessive informational requirements, membership quota, and all the other restriction tools identified; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that works to manage the recognition system in a way that is independent of government control.

170 Conditions of state RoRB

Sri Lanka, Democratic Socialist Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Theravada Buddhism); the state recognises to a lesser degree Christianity, Hinduism and Islam; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Sri Lanka is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Sri Lanka did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the government does not require either religious groups belonging to the four recognised religions or new religious groups to register to conduct what RoRB standards classify as 'basic religious activities'. However, registration is mandated for Buddhist groups wishing to construct and register new places of worship which the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious, and Cultural Affairs handles. Specific non-cabinet departments under the ministry are responsible for addressing the concerns of each major religious community. In April 2022, the government issued a new ministerial circular that supersedes and expands the scope of the 2008 circular and outlines new requirements for construction, maintenance, and registration of places of worship for all faiths. There is no registration requirement for central religious bodies of the four religions recognised by the state. New religious groups, including groups affiliated with the four recognised religions, must register with the government to obtain approval to construct new places of worship, sponsor religious worker (missionary) visas/immigration permits, operate schools, and apply for subsidies for religious education. Religious groups may also seek incorporation by an act of parliament, which requires a simple majority and affords religious groups state recognition.

Key restriction tools imposed: limitations exist on proselytism, non-recognition of any religion other than Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, successful registration is dependent upon parliamentary vote (parliamentarianism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; religious attire covering the face are banned); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish provisions for existential recognition that give equal opportunity for all belief systems to access this form of recognition; this equality may not be able to be achieved without Theravada's disestablishment as the state denomination; revoke involvement of the parliament or prime minister from the registration process in order to halt politicisation; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system independent of government influence or intervention.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Sudan, Republic of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Sudan is a secular state (Sunni Islam was disestablished in 2020).**

Human rights instruments: Sudan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Sudan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – it is implied in law that religious groups are mandated to register with the government. Registration is handled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MRA). Registration is often referred to as 'official recognition'. The MRA and the state-level entities responsible for land grants and planning may authorise or permits to build new houses of worship, taking into account zoning concerns. Allocation of land to religious entities is determined at the state level. The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) oversees NGOs and nonprofit organisations. Religious groups that engage in humanitarian or development activities must register as nonprofit NGOs by filing a standard application required by the HAC. Only NGOs registered with the HAC are eligible to apply for other administrative benefits, including land ownership, tax exemptions, and work permits. The HAC worked with the Ministry of Interior to facilitate the visa process for NGO representatives seeking to obtain visas. An interministerial committee, which includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the General Intelligence Service, and, in some cases, the military intelligence service, must approve foreign clergy and other foreigners seeking a residency permit. Malregistration – the ongoing war in Darfur and political instability undermine the ability of the government to successfully apply its registration law throughout the territory it claims.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, secondary procedure specific to religious groups with humanitarian arms or affiliated organisations that conduct humanitarian or development activities, constructing places of worship is based on a system of land allocation performed at the state level which takes into consideration zoning concerns, some agreements made in support for religious freedom in 2020 have yet to be implemented (e.g. the creation of an independent commission on religious freedom issues).

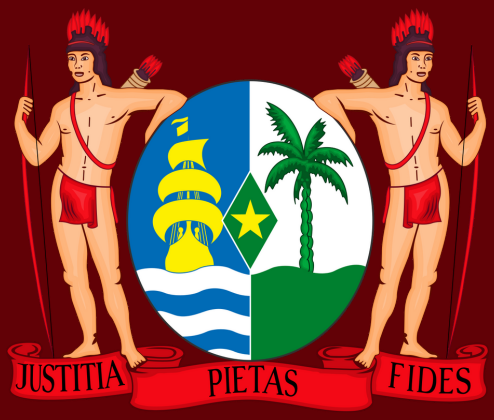
Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; importation of non-Islamic religious materials and devotional items is restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that can provide both existential recognition and legal registration for all belief systems and groups regardless of their affiliation; establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system autonomously from state authorities.

Suriname, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Suriname is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Suriname is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Suriname did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups need only register with the government if they seek financial support from the government including stipends for clergy. Registration is handled by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Registering with the ministry does not confer tax benefits. To register, religious groups must supply contact information, a history of their group, and addresses for houses of worship. Most religious groups are officially registered.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, as long as informational requirements are not misused against unfavoured group by the state they are permissible.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a set of provisions for existential recognition, not just legal registration, and extend this to all belief systems; establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system autonomously from state authorities.

Sweden, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Sweden is a secular state; state privilege (Evangelical Lutheranism); theism is affirmed in the Act of Succession.**

Human rights instruments: Sweden is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Sweden voted in favour of the UDHR; Sweden is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct what RoRB standards classify as 'basic religious activities'. Religious groups need only register if they wish to receive government funding and tax exemptions. Registration is handled by the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities (SST). To register with the SST, a religious group must submit an application to the Ministry of Culture demonstrating the group fulfils certain requirements, including that it has operated in the country for at least five years, has a clear and stable structure, is able to function independently, serves at least 3,000 persons, and has several locations in the country. The government facilitates fund raising by religious groups by offering them the option of collecting contributions through the Tax Agency in exchange for a one- time fee of 75,000 Swedish kronor ($7,000) and an annual fee of 21 kronor ($2) per member per year. The Church of Sweden is exempted from the annual fee because it, unlike other religious groups participating in the program, does not receive financial support from the SST. Only religious groups registered with the SST may participate in the program. Religious groups choose what percentage of members' annual taxable income to collect, with a median collection rate of 1 percent. The Tax Agency subtracts a percentage of the member's gross income and distributes it to the religious organisation. The member's contribution is not deductible from income tax. The government provides publicly funded grants to registered religious groups through the SST. The grants are proportional to the size of a group's membership. Registered religious groups may also apply for separate grants for specific purposes, such as security expenses.

Key restriction tools imposed: ambiguous qualifications for registered status (e.g. "has a clear and stable structure", "is able to function independently"), geographic quota (must have "several locations in the country"), longevity quota, membership quota (at least 3,000 people), non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sweden.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Revoke the geographic quota, longevity quota and membership quota as well as reverse the policy of non-recognition for all non-Lutheran denominations; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system autonomously from government interference.

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Conditions of state RoRB

Swiss Confederation



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Switzerland is a secular state; state privilege (Calvinism and Catholicism); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Switzerland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Switzerland did not vote on the UDHR; Switzerland is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – there is no overall mandate for religious groups to register with the government but certain types of religious organisations are required to register with their respective commercial registries for example religious foundations must register while religious communities do not. The constitution delegates the regulation of relations between the government and religious groups to the 26 cantons. The cantons offer legal recognition as public entities to religious communities that fulfil several prerequisites and whose applications for recognition are approved in a popular referendum. The necessary prerequisites include a statement acknowledging the right of religious freedom, the democratic organisation of the religious community, respect for the cantonal and federal constitutions and rule of law, and financial transparency. The Cantons of Basel, Zurich, and Vaud also offer religious communities legal recognition as private entities, which provides them the right to conduct religious education classes in public schools. Procedures for obtaining private legal recognition vary; for example, Basel requires approval of the Grand Council (the cantonal legislature). There is no law requiring religious groups to register in a cantonal commercial registry. However, religious foundations, characterised as institutions with a religious purpose that receive financial donations and maintain connections to a religious community, must register in the commercial registry. To register, the foundation must submit an official letter of application to relevant authorities that includes the organisation's name, purpose, board members, and head office location as well as a memorandum of association based on local law, a trademark certification, and a copy of the foundation's organisational documents. Tax-exempt status granted to religious groups varies from canton to canton. Most cantons automatically grant tax-exempt status to religious communities that receive cantonal financial support, while all other religious communities must generally establish that they are organised as nonprofit associations and submit an application for tax-exempt status to the cantonal government. The Catholic, Christ-Catholic, and Reformed Churches, which are financially supported by some cantons, do not have the same obligation and all donations are tax deductible. All cantons, with the exception of Geneva, Neuchatel, Ticino, and Vaud, financially support at least one of four religious communities – Roman Catholic, Christian Catholic, Reformed, or Jewish – that the cantons have recognised as public religious entities. Such public support is provided with funds collected through a mandatory church tax on registered church members and, in 18 of 26 cantons, a tax on businesses. The church tax on businesses is collected regardless of the religious affiliation of their owners. Only religious groups recognised as state churches or public entities are eligible to receive funds collected through the church tax, and no canton has recognised any religious groups other than these four. Payment of the church tax is voluntary in the Cantons of Ticino, Neuchatel, and Geneva, while in all other cantons any individual who elects not to pay the church tax is required to formally leave the religious institution. Church tax is generally tax deductible. The Canton of Vaud is the only canton that does not collect a church tax, although the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches are still subsidised directly through the canton's budget. In the Canton of Bern, staff of the recognised churches are funded directly by the canton. All other religious communities fund themselves solely through donations from their members or from abroad, which are in most cases only partially or not at all tax deductible. The constitution prohibits the construction of minarets. The prohibition does not apply to the four existing mosques with minarets established before the constitution was amended in 2009 to include the ban. The law allows the construction of new mosques without minarets. Religious groups of foreign origin are free to proselytise, but foreign missionaries from countries that are not members of the EU or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) must obtain a religious-worker visa to work in the country. Visa requirements include proof that the foreigner will not displace a citizen from a job, has completed formal theological training, and will be financially supported by the host organisation. Unrecognised religious groups must also demonstrate to cantonal governments that the number of their foreign religious workers is not out of proportion with the size of the community when compared with the relative number of religious workers of religious communities recognised by cantons. Immigrant clerics with insufficient language skills or lacking knowledge of local culture and customs, regardless of religious affiliation, must attend mandatory courses to facilitate their integration into society. Foreign missionaries must also have sufficient knowledge of, respect for, and understanding of national customs and culture; be conversant in at least one of the three main national languages; and hold a degree in theology. Cantons may approve an applicant lacking this proficiency by devising an "integration agreement" that sets certain goals for the applicant to meet. The host organisation must also "recognise the country's legal norms" and pledge it will not tolerate abuse of the law by its members. If an applicant is unable to meet these requirements, the government may deny residency and work permits. The government may refuse residency and work permits if a background check reveals an individual has ties to religious groups deemed "radicalised" or that have engaged in "hate preaching," which is defined as publicly inciting hatred against a religious group, disseminating ideologies intended to defame members of a religious group, organising defamatory propaganda campaigns, engaging in public discrimination, denying or trivialising genocide or other crimes against humanity, or refusing to provide service based on religion. The law authorises immigration authorities to refuse residency permits to clerics the government considers "fundamentalists" if authorities deem internal security or public order is at risk.

Key restriction tools imposed: provincialisation of both recognition and registration procedures, subjecting recognition to democratic vote (against RoRB standards), vertical recognition system in effect (verticalism).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (not free; religious attire covering the face is illegal in two cantons); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Remove all forms of segmentation in the system; this should in turn resolve inconsistencies in the legislation and laws regarding recognition and registration should in turn become national rather than cantonal; revoke identified restriction tools and all part-mandatory registration procedures; to become Receptive, establish a recognition system to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration across all belief systems and their derivatives and across multiple levels of activity and operation.

175 Conditions of state RoRB

Syrian Arab Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Syria is a secular state; state privilege (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitutional and presidential oaths.**

Human rights instruments: Syria is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Syria voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups register with the government to exist in the country legally. Registered religious groups and clergy – including all government-recognised Muslim, Jewish, and Christian groups – receive free utilities and are exempt from real estate taxes on religious buildings and personal property taxes on their official vehicles. All meetings of religious groups, except for regularly scheduled worship, require permits from the government. An individual's birth certificate records his or her religious affiliation. Documents presented when marrying or travelling for a religious pilgrimage also list the religious affiliation of the applicant. Jews are the only religious group whose passports and identity cards note their religion. The law restricts proselytising and conversion. It prohibits Muslims from converting to other religions as contrary to sharia. The law only recognises conversion to Islam. The penal code prohibits causing tension between religious communities. Malregistration – the ongoing Syrian Civil War means that the central government does not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Recognition policy: there is no official state religion, although the constitution states "Islam is the religion of the President of the republic." By law, membership in certain types of religiously oriented organisations is illegal and punishable to different degrees. This includes membership in an organisation considered by the government to be "Salafist," a designation the government loosely associates with Sunni fundamentalism. Neither the government broadly nor the state security court has specifically defined the parameters of what constitutes "Salafist" activity. The law prohibits political parties based on religion, tribal affiliation, or regional interests. Affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood is punishable by death or imprisonment. The government bans Jehovah's Witnesses as a "politically motivated Zionist organisation."

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, ambiguous and inconsistent information over registration procedures, unapproved Islamic and all non-Islamic proselytism is illegal, preapproval of religious activities by the government (including all gatherings for religious purposes), presidential religion (president of Syria must be a Muslim), prohibition of the Jehovah's Witnesses, restrictions on the publication of religious materials, state definition of religion.

Basic religious activities

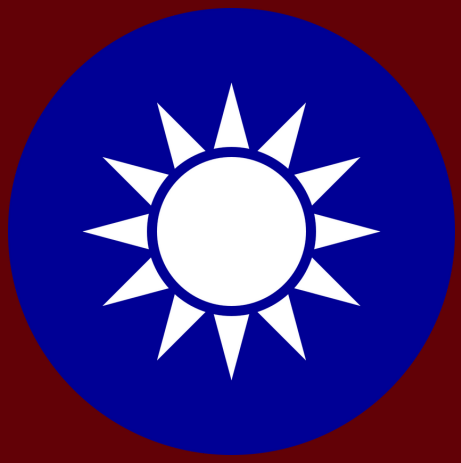
Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic literature requires government approval); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to proselytise Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the apparatus of laws the government has set in place to restrict religious activity outside what the government deems as appropriate; repeal all laws that impose nationwide bans on reasonable, non-violent groups whose activities do not contravene the basic tenets of religious freedom; repeal laws restricting both conversion from Islam and proselytism to Muslims; revoke the rule of mandatory registration and removal from the registration of all state definitions and interpretations of religion used for the imposition of restrictions and the removal of subjective language in the legislation which is again broadly misused to restrict rather than protect religious freedoms.

176 Conditions of state RoRB

Taiwan (Republic of China)



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Taiwan is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Taiwan is partied to the UNCRC; Taiwan is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Taiwan did not vote on either the UDHR or the UNDRIP.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government. The Taiwanese government legally classifies religious groups under the secular designations 'foundation' or 'social group' or under the religious designation 'temple'. A religious group may voluntarily establish a religious foundation by registering with the courts once it obtains a permit from the central or local authorities. The group must provide an organisational charter, a list of assets, and other administrative documents to register as a foundation. The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) requires that groups seeking to establish a Taiwan-wide religious foundation have real estate in at least seven administrative regions valued at 25 million new Taiwan dollars ($816,000) or more and possess at least five million new Taiwan dollars ($163,000) in cash. Alternatively, the group may receive a permit if it possesses cash in excess of 30 million new Taiwan dollars ($979,000). A group may apply instead for a permit to establish a local religious foundation from local authorities, who have lower threshold requirements than the central authorities. Temples may directly register with local authorities without needing permission from the MOI. Taiwan-wide religious social groups and local religious social groups may register with the MOI and local authorities, respectively. There are no minimum financial requirements for registration of temples or religious social groups. Registered religious groups operate on an income-tax-free basis. Registered religious foundations and temples are also exempt from building and property taxes. Non-registered groups are not eligible for the tax advantages available to registered religious groups. As of 2021, there were approximately 17,700 registered religious groups, including 1,800 religious foundations, 11,800 temples, and 4,100 religious social groups, representing more than 22 religions. Many groups choose not to register individual places of worship and instead operate them as the personal property of the group's leaders; such property is subject to taxes. The Falun Gong Society is registered as a sports organisation and not as a religious group. The law provides that temples are under the management of a trustee monk or nun. It states, however, "They cannot take charge as trustee monk/nun if they are not citizens of the Republic of China [Taiwan]." The law does not apply to temples that are administered by Taiwan authorities (i.e., authorities own the land and buildings), local public organisations, or private persons. In 2004, the Council of Grand Justices declared several articles of the act unconstitutional, since it imposed undue restrictions on how religious groups transfer their assets. In May, the Legislative Yuan passed a law allowing qualified religious groups to change the registration of real estate assets formerly held in the name of individual members. Under the new law, such assets may be held under the name of the associated religious foundation, religious corporation, or temple. The MOI separates religious and charitable groups based on a group's articles of association. There is no law or policy that oversees a religious group's use of donations made to that group, whether for religious or charitable activities, or that requires a religious group to establish a separate charitable entity to conduct charitable activities. The law, however, prohibits charitable foundations from using donations for non-charitable purposes. Some religious groups establish separate charitable foundations to promote their charitable activities. An organisation whose primary objective is philanthropy is not eligible to register as a religious group.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, financial quota (have real estate valued in total at over $902,000; and, possess at least $180,000 in cash), geographic quota (have "real estate in at least 7 administrative regions), localisation of procedures offer an alternative procedure with lower requirements, secondary procedure for nationwide registration procedures.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present segmented structure of the registration; revoke laws surrounding the establishment permit in preregistration including the dissolution of financial quotas; establish a revitalised recognition system that can provide both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and at multiple levels of activity without creating a situation of vertical recognition; to classified Dynamic, set up an independent recognition agency to manage the system.

177 Conditions of state RoRB

Tajikistan, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Tajikistan is a secular state; state privilege (Sunni Islam).**

Human rights instruments: Tajikistan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Tajikistan was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Tajikistan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups register with the government to exist legally in the country. The general term for religious or belief organisations in the country is 'religious association' which is divided into groups classified as 'religious organisations' and 'religious communities'. The Committee on Religion, Regulation of Traditions, Celebrations, and Ceremonies handles the registration of all religious groups. According to the law, a religious community, unlike a religious organisation, is not a legal entity. Its members may gather to conduct other religious activities, which are not defined by law. For example, individuals may gather for joint prayer, attend funeral prayers, and celebrate religious holidays. Types of religious communities include Friday mosques, daily five-time prayer mosques, prayer houses, and other places of worship. After registering with the CRA, a religious community must also function on the basis of its charter, which determines the nature and scope of its activities. The law defines a religious association as any group composed of persons who join for religious purposes. A religious association is a voluntary association of followers of one faith, with the purpose of holding joint worship and celebration of religious ceremonies, religious education, and spreading religious beliefs. To register a religious association, a group of at least 10 persons older than 18 must obtain a certificate from local authorities confirming the adherents of their religious faith have lived in a particular local area for five years. The group must then submit to the CRA proof of the Tajik citizenship of its founders, along with their home addresses and dates of birth. The group must provide an account of its beliefs and religious practices and describe its attitudes related to education, family, and marriage. The group must specify in its charter the activities it plans to undertake, and once registered as a religious association, must report annually on its activities or face deregistration. The law prescribes penalties for religious associations that engage in activities contrary to the purposes and objectives set out in their charters, and it assigns the CRA responsibility for issuing fines for such activities. The law imposes fines for carrying out religious activities without state registration or reregistration; violating provisions on organising and conducting religious activities; performing prayers, religious rites, and ceremonies in undesignated places; and performing activities beyond the purposes and objectives defined by the charter of the religious association. For first-time offences, the government fines individuals 960 - 1,280 somoni ($95 - $126)), heads of religious associations 2,560 - 3,840 somoni ($252 - $378)), and registered religious associations, as legal entities, 12,800 - 25,600 somoni ($1,260 - $2,500). For repeat offences within one year of an initial fine, penalties are increased to 2,560 - 3,840 somoni ($252 - $378) for individuals, 6,400 - 7,680 somoni ($630 - $800) for heads of religious associations, and 32,000 - 38,400 somoni ($3,000 - $3,800) for registered religious associations. If a religious association conducts activities without registering, local authorities may impose additional fines or close a place of worship. The same law broadly empowers the CRA to create regulations to implement state policies on religion, such as establishing specific guidelines for the performance of religious ceremonies. In addition to approving the registration of religious associations, organisations, and communities, the CRA maintains a broad mandate that includes approving the construction of houses of worship, the participation of children in religious education, and the dissemination of religious literature. The CRA oversees activities of religious associations, such as the performance of religious rites, and the development and adoption of legal acts aimed at the implementation of a state policy on the freedom of conscience and religious associations. Religious associations must submit information on sources of income, property lists, expenditures, numbers of employees, wages and taxes paid, and other information upon request by the CRA. The law restricts Islamic prayer to four locations: mosques, cemeteries, homes, and shrines. It regulates the registration, size, and location of mosques, limiting the number of mosques that may be registered within a given population area. The parental responsibility law prohibits individuals younger than 18 from participating in “public religious activities,” including attending worship services at public places of worship. Individuals younger than 18 may attend religious funerals and practice religion at home under parental guidance. The statute allows individuals younger than 18 to participate in religious activities that are part of specific educational programs in authorised religious institutions. The freedom of conscience law allows registered religious organisations to produce, export, import, sell, and distribute religious literature and other materials containing religious content after receiving CRA approval. Only registered religious associations and organisations are entitled to establish enterprises that produce literature and material with religious content. Such literature and material must indicate the full name of the religious organisation producing it. The code of administrative violations allows government authorities to levy fines for the production, export, import, sale, or distribution of religious literature without CRA permission. According to the code, violators are subject to confiscation of such literature, as well as fines of 3,840 - 6,400 somoni ($378 - $600) for individuals, 10,880 - 12,160 somoni ($1,100 - $1,200) for government officials, and 38,400 - 64,000 somoni ($3,800 - $6,300) for legal entities, a category that includes all organisations. Under the code, producing literature or material containing religious content without identifying the name of the religious organisation producing it entails fines of 38,400 - 51,200 somoni ($3,800 - $5,000) and confiscation of the material; establishing an enterprise to produce religious literature or material for religious purposes, other than those established by registered religious associations, entails a fine of 51,200 somoni - 64,000 somoni ($5,000 - $6,300).

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, child participation in "public religious activities" are prohibited, excessive informational requirements, fines on unauthorised religious literature and on unregistered religious groups, government preapproval of places of worship, membership quota, registration is a necessary precursor to a religious group legally being able to produce and propagate religious materials, restriction of Islamic prayer to four location types (mosques, cemeteries, homes, shrines), state approval of religious preachers and leaders, state approval of religious publications is required before they may be imported, state definition of religion, the stipulation that monitorial requirements may be conducted upon request (ad hoc) by the government is impermissible to RoRB standards, zoning quotas.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; all religious materials require government preapproval); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present status quo of laws terminally restricting the religious lives of Tajiks; repeal the mandatory registration law along with similar policies that allow for undue government involvement in the affairs of religious groups; halt the state’s vilification of religious groups it does not agree with on matters of belief; make a clearer distinction between recognition and registration.

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Tanzania, United Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Tanzania is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity and Islam).**

Human rights instruments: Tanzania is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Tanzania did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – registration is required by law on both the mainland and in Zanzibar for all religious or belief organisations. The Registrar of Societies at the Ministry of Home Affairs handles registration on the mainland while the Office of the Registrar General handles registration on Zanzibar. The fines for offences under the Societies Act, including operating without registration, range from one million to 10 million shillings ($429-$4,300). To register, a religious group must provide the names of at least 10 members, a written constitution, resumés of its leaders, and a letter of recommendation from the district commissioner. Such groups may then list individual congregations, which do not need separate registration. Muslim groups registering on the mainland must provide a letter of approval from the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA). Muslim groups registering in Zanzibar must provide a letter of approval from the mufti, the government's official liaison to the Muslim community. Christian groups in Zanzibar may register directly with the registrar general. The government does not designate religious affiliation on passports or records of vital statistics. Police reports must state religious affiliation if an individual will be required to provide sworn testimony. Applications for medical care must specify religious affiliation so that any specific religious customs may be observed. The law requires the government to record the religious affiliation of every prisoner and to provide facilities for worship for prisoners.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, excessive informational requirements (biographical information on group members and leaders as well as a letter of recommendation from the district commissioner), Islamic groups are offered different procedures and have the additional requirement of retrieving a "letter of approval" from the mufti, membership quota (at least 10 members), reregistration every five years (failure to reregister will result in deregistration and the subsequent inability to operate legally in the country due to the mandatoriness of registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration for propagational use); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Repeal laws demanding mandatory registration and revoke policies allowing the government to intervene in the internal affairs of religious organisations; revoke membership quotas and retributions for unregistration; establish a revitalised recognition that can provide both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems equally.

179 Conditions of state RoRB

Thailand, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Thailand is a secular state; state privilege (Theravada Buddhism); Brahmin-Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and Sikhs are state-recognised religious communities.**

Human rights instruments: Thailand is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Thailand voted in favour of the UDHR as Siam.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – although the law does not mandate that religious groups must register with the government, only groups affiliating with one of the five recognised religions may register for benefits from the state. These benefits include access to state subsidies, exemption from property and income taxes, and preferential allocation of resident visas for the registered organisation's foreign officials. Registration as a religious group is not mandatory, and religious groups may operate without government interference, whether they are officially registered or recognised or not. The Religious Affairs Department (RAD) is responsible for registering religious groups, excluding Buddhist groups, which are overseen by the National Buddhism Bureau (NBB), an independent state agency under direct supervision of the Prime Minister. The RAD may register a new religious denomination outside one of the five recognised religious groups only if it meets the following qualifications: the national census indicates the group has at least 5,000 adherents, possesses a uniquely recognisable theology, is not politically active, and obtains formal approval in a RAD-organised meeting of representatives from the concerned ministries and the five recognised umbrella religious groups. To register with the RAD, a religious group's leader also must submit documentation on the group's objectives and procedures, any relationship to a foreign country, a list of executive members and senior officials, and locations of administrative, religious, and teaching sites. In practice, however, the government as a matter of policy will not recognise any new religious groups outside the five umbrella groups. The RAD sets a quota for the number of foreign missionaries permitted to register and operate in the country: 1,357 Christian, six Muslim, 20 Hindu, and 41 Sikh. Registration confers some benefits, such as longer visa validity. Representatives of the five officially recognised religious groups may apply for one-year visas that are renewable. Foreign missionaries from other religious groups must renew their visas every 90 days.

Recognition policy: while there is no official state religion, the constitution requires the King to be Buddhist and declares that he is the "upholder of religions." The Sangha Supreme Council serves as Thai Buddhism's governing clerical body. The King has unilateral authority to appoint or remove members from the Sangha Supreme Council irrespective of the monk's rank and without consent or consultation with the Supreme Patriarch, whom the King also has legal authority to appoint.

Key restriction tools imposed: criticism of Buddhism may lead to fines or imprisonment, membership quota (in the form of a census quota), registered status will not be bestowed to any groups that belongs to a religion beyond the five already recognised by the government, registration procedures are split between Buddhist and non-Buddhist groups and organisations, state definition of religion, the government does not recognise religions or religious communities beyond the five already recognised, the prime minister directly supervises the registration of Buddhist groups.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the apparatus of laws and restrictive policies that have been put in place to restrict religious activity; establish a revitalised recognition system that crucially provides existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives without discrimination; remove all forms of undue involvement of the government in the internal affairs of religious organisations.

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Timor-Leste, Democratic Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Timor-Leste is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Timor-Leste is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Timor-Leste did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – religious organisations that conduct religious services but do not engage in other activities do not need to register with the government and may obtain tax- exempt status from the Ministry of Finance. Religious organisations seeking to open private schools or provide other community services must submit articles of association and other relevant documentation to register as nonprofit corporate bodies through the Ministry of Justice's National Directorate for Registry and Notary Services (DNRN). The law requires a separate registration with the Ministry of Interior for associations with primarily foreign members, including religious organisations, which must submit their articles of incorporation, proof they have the means to carry out their activities, and the name of a designated representative. To receive a tax identification number, organisations must register first with the Ministry of Justice and then bring that registration to the Service for Registration and Verification of Businesses, the business registration agency. The DNRN then issues a certificate and legally charters the organisation. The Catholic Church has a bilateral cooperation agreement (BCA) with the government which establishes a legal framework for cooperation, grants the Catholic Church autonomy in establishing and running schools, provides tax benefits, safeguards the Church's historical and cultural heritage, and acknowledges the right of its foreign missionaries to serve in the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, multi-registration, secondary procedure, tertiary procedure.

Basic religious activities

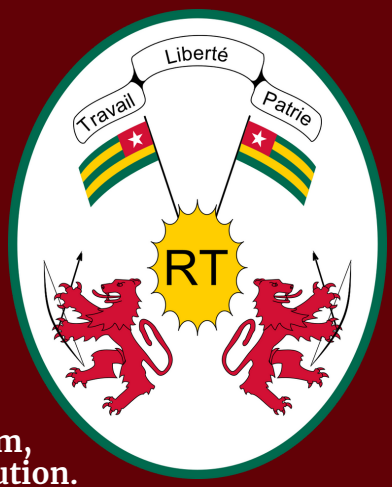
Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish differentiation between existential recognition and legal registration; forms of discriminations and harassment reported should be resolved through means of recognition; remove some of the administrative hurdles; to achieve Dynamic status, establish an independent recognition agency to manage the recognition system.

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Togolese Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Togo is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism, Islam, and Protestantism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Togo is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Togo was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Togo did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad-discriminatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups register with the government except for Catholic, Protestant and Islamic groups. Legal registration is amalgamated with what the law calls 'official recognition'. Official recognition as a religious association provides other groups the same rights as those afforded to Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims. Registration also entitles religious groups to receive government benefits such as government-provided teachers for faith-based schools and special assistance in case of natural disasters. Organisations apply for registration with the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA). A religious group must submit its statutes, statement of doctrine, bylaws, names and addresses of executive board members, leaders' religious credentials, a site-use agreement, map for religious facilities, and description of its finances. It must also pay a registration fee of 150,000 CFA francs ($244). Criteria for recognition include authenticity of the religious leader's diploma and the government's assessment of the ethical behaviour of the group, which must not cause a breach of public order. The DRA issues a receipt that serves as temporary recognition for religious groups applying for registration. The investigation and issuance of formal written authorisation usually takes several years. By law, religious groups must request permission to conduct large nighttime celebrations, particularly those likely to block city streets or involve loud ceremonies in residential areas.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, ambiguous qualifications are stipulated for registered status which could be easily misused against religious groups the status does not favour, delay of receipt of registered status goes far beyond what is permissible to RoRB standards (up to several years), excessive informational requirements, registration fee ($260) far exceeds the $100 threshold set down by RoRB standards (but has been reduced from $280 from the year prior), there are approximately 900 pending registration applications that the government has not progressed.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; rules on items for propagational use remain unclear); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Re-establish the recognition system in such a way that it extends existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives equally; dismantlement of the present body of policies restricting registration such as the relatively high fee; revoke the mandatory registration order and ensure that informational requirements are not excessive.

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Tonga, Kingdom of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Tonga is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Tonga is partied to the UNCRC; Tonga is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Tonga was absent during voting on UNDRIP; Tonga did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not require that religious groups register with the government in order to conduct what RoRB standards define as 'basic religious activities'. Religious groups only need to register to receive certain financial benefits and to perform certain acts. Any group may gather, worship, and practice their faith without informing the government or seeking its permission. A religious group, however, must register to be eligible for specific benefits, such as recognition of clergy as marriage officers; tax exemptions on nonbusiness income, importation of goods for religious purposes and fundraising; protection of a denomination's name; and access to broadcasting on public channels. Registration as a religious group requires an application to the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Innovation, and Labour, accompanied by certified copies of the group's rules and constitution, a declaration detailing any other trust in which the applicant holds assets, a witness's signature, and a 115 pa'anga ($51) application fee. If a group elects to register with the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Innovation, and Labour, the law requires it also to register with the Ministry of Revenue and Customs as a nonprofit organisation. The law allows religious leaders to legalise marriages. According to the law, only marriages solemnised by clergy or religious officiants, who must be Christian, are legally recognised, and no other marriage is valid. Those non-Christians unwilling to be married by a Christian minister have no legal options to marry.

Recognition policy: the constitution requires that the Sabbath, which the government recognises as Sunday, be "kept holy" and prohibits commercial transactions on the Sabbath. Only a limited number of restaurants and retails stores are allowed to operate after receiving approval by the Minister of Police. The law also prohibits many recreational activities and sports on the Sabbath. The law applies to both Christians and non-Christians.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, dual registration, possible nominal restriction ("protection of a denomination's name" is listed as a benefit of registration), signature quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that crucially provides existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives without discrimination; revoke borderline mandatory registration requirements and the imposed signature quota; to become classified as dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is autonomous of government control that is responsible for managing the recognition system.

Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Trinidad and Tobago is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Trinidad and Tobago is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Trinidad and Tobago did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government doesn't mandate that religious groups register with it, listing the officiation of marriages as a benefit of registration in turn makes registration pseudo-mandatory since this is classified a 'basic religious activity' according to RoRB standards. Other benefits of registration include the ability to receive tax-exempt donations or gifts of land and the legal ability to receive visas for foreign missionaries. Religious groups have the same rights and obligations as most legal entities, regardless of their registration status. They may, for example, own land and hire employees, and they are liable for property taxes and government-mandated employee benefits. Chaplains representing different faiths present in the country may visit prisons to perform religious acts and minister to prisoners. Foreign missionaries must meet standard requirements for entry visas and must represent a registered religious group in the country. Permits are valid for a maximum period of three years at the cost of 500 Trinidad and Tobago dollars ($75) per year. Missionaries may not remain longer than three years per visit but may reenter after one year's absence.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, delayed registration, longevity quota (1 year), non-response to the Orisha religious group's application in 2018.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To reach Receptive status, establish a revitalised recognition system that provides both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives and at multiple levels of activity; to become classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is autonomous of government control that is responsible for managing the recognition system; revoke the imposition of a longevity quota.

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Tunisia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **Tunisia is a secular state (Islam was disestablished in 2022); state privilege (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Tunisia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Tunisia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government, however, many "basic religious activities" such as organising meetings and public events as well as publishing leaflets are all dependent upon a group's completion of registration which makes registration pseudo-mandatory. Religious or belief organisations are registered under the religious designation 'religious association' and this process is handled by the Prime Minister's Office. Benefits of registration include the legal ability to establish a bank account, conduct financial activities such as charity work, and receive favourable tax treatment, including tax-free donations from government-approved associations, provided the association does not purport to represent all believers of a religious group or use the name of a religious group. To establish an association, a religious group must submit a registered letter to the Prime Minister's Office stating the purposes of the association; copies of the national identity cards of its founders, who must be citizens; and two copies of the articles of association signed by the association's founders or their representatives. The articles of association must contain the official name of the association in Arabic and any other language used; its address; a statement of its objectives; membership criteria; membership fees; and a statement of organisational structure, including identification of the decision-making body for the association. The law requires that associations and political parties respect the rule of law and basic democratic principles. The law prohibits associations from engaging in for- profit activities, providing material support to individual political candidates, or adopting bylaws or conducting activities that incite violence or promote hatred, fanaticism, or discrimination on the basis of religion. An association may receive tax-exempt income from organisations, including foreign organisations that have a prior agreement with the government. Once an association receives a return receipt from the Prime Minister's Office, it has seven days to submit an announcement of the name, purpose, and objectives of the association to the government press. The government press has 15 days to publish the announcement in the official gazette, which constitutes the association's official registration. In the event the government does not return a registered receipt within 30 days, an association may proceed to submit its documents for publication and obtain registration. A foreign association may establish a branch in the country, but the government may also reject its registration request if the government finds the principles or objectives of the foreign association contravene the law. Violations of the provisions of the law related to associations are punishable, first by a warning of up to 30 days from the secretary general of the government, who reports directly to the Prime Minister, then by a court order suspending the association's activities for up to 30 days if the violations persist. If the association is still in violation of the law, the secretary general may then appeal to the court for dissolution of the association. Under the law, associations have the right to appeal court decisions. Registered associations have the right to organise meetings and demonstrations, to publish reports and leaflets, to own real estate, and to engage in "all types of civil activities." The law states that the government oversees Islamic prayer services by subsidising mosques, appointing imams, and paying their salaries. The grand mufti, appointed by the president, is charged with declaring religious holidays, issuing certificates of conversion to Islam, attending to citizens' inquiries, representing the country at international religious conferences, providing opinions on school curricula, and studying and writing about Islam, including offering religious guidance and issuing fatwas. The MRA suggests themes for Friday sermons but does not regulate their content. The government may initiate administrative and legal procedures to remove imams whom authorities determine to be preaching "divisive" theology. By law, new mosques may be constructed, provided they are built in accordance with national urban planning regulations. The MRA pays for construction of mosques, although private and foreign donors are also able to contribute to construction costs. Mosques become government property upon completion, after which the government must maintain them.

Recognition policy: the 2022 constitution requires the president to be Muslim, as did the 2014 constitution. A 1964 modus vivendi with the Holy See grants official recognition to the Roman Catholic Church. The agreement allows the Catholic Church to function in the country and provides state recognition of the church. The agreement, however, restricts religious activities and services to the physical confines of authorised churches and prohibits construction of new churches and the ringing of church bells. A limited number of Catholic schools and charities may operate under the modus vivendi, but their financial activities are conducted through registration as an association and their affiliation with the church is not publicised.

Key restriction tools imposed: bilateral cooperation agreements are extended only to the Catholic Church meaning that any non-Catholic or non-Islamic religion are non-recognised, broad grounds exists for the denial of registration of GFOs, excessive informational requirements are requested as part of registration procedures, nominal restriction.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; preapproval required for non-Islamic religious materials and items); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted; the law criminalises forced conversions which may be viewed broadly and applied arbitrarily in favour of the religion from which the person is converting such as a Muslim converting from Islam); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present apparatus of laws restricting non-Islamic religious activity; establish a reorganised recognition that provides recognition and registration to all belief systems and their derivatives; remove all forms of subjective language from the legislation on religion and belief.

Türkiye, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Turkey is a secular state; state privilege (Sunni Islam).**

Human rights instruments: Turkey is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Turkey voted in favour of the UDHR; Turkey is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although registration is not explicitly mandatory, it is considered mandatory by the government's assertion that registration is a necessary prerequisite for operating and putting in a request for the legal recognition of a place of worship; running religious services at a place of worship unregistered by the central government is a criminal offence; the practice of Islam is 'regulated' throughout the country by the Diyanet.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, criminalisation of unregistered places of worship, group dissolution procedures are structured in such a way that they could be easily misused to force the closure of religious groups unfavoured by the state, prohibition of Sufi and "other religious-social orders (tarikats) and lodges (cemaats), restrictive laws exist around the organisation of a religious group and what actions it may or may not legally conduct.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present apparatus of laws restricting religious registration; provide recognition to all belief systems without discrimination; revoke all religious prohibitions and the criminalisation of unregistered places of worship.

Turkmenistan

2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**



FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Turkmenistan is a secular state; state privilege (Russian Orthodox Church and Sunni Islam).**

Human rights instruments: Turkmenistan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Turkmenistan was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Turkmenistan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups must register with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) before conducting any operations or activities, including most 'basic religious activities'. Religious groups must also reregister with the MOJ whenever the organisation changes its address or amends its legal charter. The law permits the registration only of those religious organisations that have at least 50 resident members older than 18; a similar requirement applies to nonreligious civil associations. The law defines a religious organisation as a voluntary association of citizens affiliated with a religion, organised to conduct religious services and other rites and ceremonies and/or to provide religious education, that is registered in accordance with the country's legislation. According to the law, the State Commission on Religious Organisations and Expert Evaluation of Religious Information Resources (SCROEERIR) is responsible for helping religious organisations register with government agencies, explaining the law to representatives of religious organisations, monitoring the activities of religious organisations to ensure they comply with the law, assisting with the translation and publication of religious literature, and promoting understanding and tolerance among different religious organisations. The law states SCROEERIR must approve all individuals appointed as leaders of religious organisations, although the law does not specify the procedures for obtaining the required approval. SCROERRIR operates under the leadership of the Grand Mufti, who is appointed by the government, as are all other senior Muslim clerics, Sunni or Shia. The Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Education, Health, Religion, Sports, Tourism, Science, New Technologies, and Innovation oversees SCROEERIR's work. The chair of SCROEERIR is also the chair of the Department for Work with Religious Organisations in the Cabinet of Ministers. One member of SCROEERIR is believed to be from the Russian Orthodox Church. Except for the name of the chairman, the government does not make public the membership of SCROERRIR nor its deliberations. To register or reregister, organisations must submit to SCROEERIR their contact information; proof of address, a statement requesting registration signed by the founders and board members of the organisation, two copies of the organisation's charter, and the names, addresses, and dates of birth of the organisation's founders. They must pay a registration fee starting at 300 manat ($90), based on size of the organization and where it is registered. Once SCROEERIR endorses an application for registration, it is submitted to the MOJ, which coordinates an interministerial approval process involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other government offices. According to government procedures, the MOJ may additionally request the biographic information of all members of an organisation applying for registration. The law states leaders of registered religious organizations must be citizens who have received an "appropriate religious education," but it does not define that term. Each subsidiary congregation of a registered religious organisation must also register, and the registration process is the same as that which applies to the parent organisation. The tax code stipulates registered religious organizations are exempt from taxes. The law states the MOJ will not register a religious organisation if its goals or activities contradict the constitution or if SCROEERIR does not endorse its application. The law assigns the Office of the Prosecutor General to monitor the compliance of a religious organisation with the constitution. A court may suspend the activities of a religious organization if it determines the organisation to be in violation of the constitution; such a suspension may only be overcome if the organisation submits documentation satisfying the court that the activities that led to suspension have been stopped. The law also states that grounds for dissolution of a religious organization include activities "that violate the rights, freedoms, and lawful interests of citizens" or "harm their health and morale." The administrative code covering religious organisations delineates a schedule of fines for conducting activities not described in a religious organisation's charter. Unregistered religious organisations and unregistered subsidiary congregations of registered religious organisations may not legally conduct religious activities; establish places of worship; gather for religious services, including in private residences; produce or disseminate religious materials; or proselytise. Any such activity is punishable as an administrative offence by fines ranging from 100 to 2,000 manat ($570), with higher fines for religious leaders and lower fines for members. The law states MOJ officials have the right to attend any religious event held by a registered religious organisation and to question religious leaders about any aspect of their activities. The criminal and administrative codes dictate punishment for private individuals who harass members of registered religious organisations. The law allows registered religious organisations to create educational establishments to train clergy and other religious personnel after obtaining a licence. The Cabinet of Ministers establishes the procedures for doing so. The law also states individuals teaching religious disciplines at religious educational establishments must have a theological education and must carry out their activities with the permission of the central governing body of the religious organisation and the approval of SCROEERIR. Local government offices have the right to monitor the "religious situation" within their jurisdictions, send proposals to SCROEERIR to change or update legislation on religious freedom, and coordinate religious ceremonies conducted outside of religious buildings. The law allows local governments, with the approval of SCROEERIR, to make decisions regarding the construction of religious buildings and structures within their jurisdictions. The law prohibits the publication of religious literature inciting "religious, national, ethnic, and/or racial hatred." SCROEERIR must approve imported religious literature, and only registered religious organisations may import literature. Registered religious organisations may be fined for publishing or disseminating religious material without government approval. The administrative code sets out a detailed schedule of fines, ranging from 200 to 2,000 manat ($57-570), for producing, importing, and disseminating unauthorised literature and other materials. The law prohibits unregistered religious groups or unregistered subsidiary congregations of registered religious organisations from providing religious education. The administrative code sets out a detailed schedule of fines, ranging from 100 to 500 manat ($29-140), for providing unauthorised religious education to children. The law does not address the activities of foreign missionaries and foreign religious organisations. The administrative code, however, bans registered religious organisations from receiving assistance from foreign entities for prohibited activities. The law requires religious groups to register all foreign assistance with the MOJ and to provide interim and final reports on the use of funds. The administrative code provides a detailed schedule of fines of up to 10,000 manat ($2,900) on both unregistered and registered religious groups for accepting unauthorised funds from foreign sources.

Key restriction tools imposed: all aspects of religious activity must be preapproved by the SCROEERIR before they take place including the appointment of religious leaders, amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, broad grounds for the deregistration of a group and the suspension of its activities leave groups unfavoured by the state vulnerable to having this grounds misused against them, criminalisation of unregistration, dual registration between the SCROEERIR and the MOJ, registration fee system some categories of which exceed the $100 threshold set down in RoRB standards, excessive informational requirements will more than likely be misused by the state against groups is does not favour, lack of information is provided by the government over what criteria a religious group must fulfil to complete the necessary "endorsement" process as part of registration procedures, membership quota, nationality quota, permission to exist, preapproval, state definition of religion, state supervision, triennial reregistration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; preapproval required for all religious materials and items); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (not free; although private worship is protected in law it is restricted in practice); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present terminally restrictive apparatus that restricts all aspects of religious live in the society; reorganise the recognition system so it extends authentic recognition to all belief systems and groups; revoke all the restriction tools identified in the above analysis.

Tuvalu

2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Tuvalu is partied to the UNCRC; Tuvalu is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Tuvalu was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Tuvalu did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: conditional registration with the central government – religious groups are not required register with the central government unless their adult membership exceeds at least 2% of the country's total population according to the latest census. Failure to register may result in prosecution. This makes registration stipulatory in general terms but mandatory under certain conditions and also restricts access to registration for those groups falling under the membership threshold. The Ministry of Local Government requires religious groups seeking registration to submit a request signed by the head and supported by five other members of the organisation. Information on and proof of the number of adherents, the name of the religious organisation, and approval from the traditional elder councils, known as falekaupule, are also required in the request. Broad mandatory registration with local councils – under the law, all religious groups, regardless of size, must register with and obtain approval from the falekaupule of any island on which they conduct services. The law prohibits joint or public worship by religious groups not approved by these councils. The law also allows the falekaupule to withhold permission from certain religious groups to meet publicly, should they be judged locally to "directly threaten the values and culture of the island community." The law provides for unapproved groups to be fined up to 500 Australian dollars ($340) if they engage in public meetings in violation of the law. The law guarantees the right of individuals to worship freely within their own residences.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement, grounds for the denial of registration are ambiguous and could easily be misused against religious groups that are unfavoured by the state membership quota, possibility for the prosecution of groups registered that fit criteria for registeration, possible inverted membership quota, registered status is left up to the elder councils (falekaupule) to decide, signature quota.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present series of laws and policies restricting religious activity, especially the laws that give prime authority to falekaupule to make decisions on religious activity and the internal affairs of religious organisations; if this cannot be achieved without the disestablishment of Calvinism, then this may need to take place; become party to and ratify the ICCPR; revoke the rule of mandatory registration and any retributions associated with unregistration; re-establish the recognition system so that its provisions are extended to all belief systems and their derivatives; to become classified as Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of the government to manage this re-established recognition system with the assurance that politicisation of the registration procedures does not take place and that such procedures are no longer restrictive.

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Uganda, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Uganda is a secular state; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Uganda is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Uganda was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Uganda did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the government requires religious groups to register with it to legally exist in the country in addition to obtaining an operating licence except those religious groups that are larger and more historically established in the country including Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Seventh-day Adventist groups, and groups affiliated with the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. Registration is handled by the Registration Services Bureau while operating licences are granted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, usually on a five-year basis. The Bureau requires faith-based organisations to provide a copy of a land title or proof of ownership of premises; a copy of the board resolution to start a faith-based organisation; a copy of the memorandum and articles of association spelling out what the organisation intends to do; allotment of shareholding; and copies of the national identity cards of the directors. The law exempts registered religious groups and their non-profit activities from direct taxation. The country's coat of arms bears the motto "For God and My Country." The law prohibits secular broadcasters from stating opinions on religious doctrine or faith. The law also prohibits radio and television stations from broadcasting advertisements that "promote psychic practices or practices related to the occult," material that encourages persons to change their faith, and content that uses or contains blasphemy, which is not defined by law. The government, however, seldom enforces these provisions.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, broad grounds on which religious groups may be deregistered or denied registration in the first instance are based on the use of the securitisation of religion against groups the state does not favour, excessive informational requirements, fixed-term registration on a five-year basis (temporary registration).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; broadcasters are restricted from publishing materials that proselytise); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Revoke mandatory registration and resolve the various internal issues of the recognition system; establish a revitalised recognition system that provides both existential and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives; this should also resolve the issue of there being a lack of distinction between religious and secular entity registration.

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Ukraine



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Ukraine is a secular state**; **state privilege (Orthodox Church of Ukraine)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Ukraine is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Ukraine abstained from voting on the UNDRIP but has since endorsed it; Ukraine did not vote on the UDHR; Ukraine is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory and malregistration**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration: although the law does not mandate that religious groups with the government, there are some activities listed as registration benefits that are classified as "basic religious activities" by RoRB standards including the ability to establish periodicals or companies for manufacturing religious items or publishing arms of the religious group. Religious organisations include religious congregations, administrations and centers, theological schools, monasteries, religious brotherhoods, missions, and associations consisting of those religious organisations. Religious associations are represented by their centers (administrations). To register and obtain legal-entity status, an organisation must register either with the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, which until December 20 was the government agency responsible for religious affairs, or with regional government authorities, depending upon the nature of the organisation. Religious centers, administrations, monasteries, brotherhoods, missions, and schools register with the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy. Congregations register with the oblast authorities where they are present. While these congregations may form the constituent units of a nationwide religious organisation, the nationwide organisation does not register on a national basis and may not obtain recognition as a legal entity. The constituent units instead register individually and obtain legal-entity status. The law directs regional governments' religious affairs departments to handle dual registration. The law required all religious organisations to update and reregister their statutes by January 31, 2020. The law also specifies reregistration requirements for organisations that wish to change their affiliation, particularly UOC parishes seeking to join the OCU. The law requires a quorum, as defined by each congregation and usually comprising two-thirds or three-fourths of a religious organisation's members, to decide on a change of affiliation. The law also requires a vote by two-thirds of those present to authorise such a decision. The law bans any transfer of an organisation's property until the affiliation change is finalised. To be eligible for registration, a religious congregation must comprise at least 10 adult members and submit to the registration authorities its statute (charter), certified copies of the resolution that created it and was adopted by founding members, and a document confirming its right to own or use premises. Registered religious organisations, which include individual religious congregations, administrative offices, theological schools, monasteries, religious brotherhoods and sisterhoods, missions, and religious associations, must register with tax authorities to acquire nonprofit status, which many do for banking purposes. Without legal-entity status, a religious organisation may not own property, conduct banking activities, be eligible for utility bill discounts, join civic or advisory boards of government agencies, or establish periodicals, nongovernmental pension funds, officially accredited schools, publishing, agricultural and other companies, or companies manufacturing religious items. Religious organisations without legal-entity status may meet and worship and may also publish and distribute religious materials. In accordance with the stipulation against national registration, however, only a registered constituent unit of a nationwide religious association may own property or conduct business activities, either for itself or on behalf of the nationwide association. The law grants property tax exemptions to religious organisations and considers them non-profit organisations. According to the constitution, organisers must notify local authorities in advance of any type of planned public gathering, and authorities may challenge the legality of the planned event. According to a 2016 Constitutional Court decision, religious organisations need only inform local authorities of their intention to hold a public gathering and need not apply for permission or notify authorities within a specific period in advance of the event. Government regulations on identity documents, including passports, allow religious head coverings in photographs. Only registered religious organisations may seek restitution of communal property confiscated by the former Communist regime. Religious organisations must apply to regional authorities for property restitution. The law states authorities should complete their consideration of a restitution claim within a month. The law restricts the activities of foreign-based religious groups and defines the permissible activities of noncitizen clergy, preachers, teachers, and other representatives of foreign-based religious groups. By law, foreign religious workers may "preach, administer religious ordinances, or practice other canonical activities," but they may do so only for the registered religious organisation that invited them and with the approval of the government body that registered the statute of the organisation. Missionary activity is included under permissible activities. Malregistration – the ongoing conflict over Crimea and the Donbas and the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine have crippled the Ukrainian central government's ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, localisation of registration procedures, membership quota, secondary procedure for non-profit status, some benefits of registration are "basic religious activities" and should not be dependent on registration such as establishing a publishing company or a company for the manufacture of religious items.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dissolve membership quotas and the segmented structure of the recognition system; establish more definitive procedures for existential recognition; reduce the convolution within the present procedures for registration as minor issues within the present system; procedures for registration and recognition should be inclusive of all belief systems; also to be classified dynamic, a recognition agency would need to be established that is independent of government control.

United Arab Emirates



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Partial claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: UAE is partied to the UNCRC and the UNDRIP; UAE is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; UAE did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: pseudo-mandatory registration – although the government does not mandate that religious groups with it, there are some activities listed as registration benefits that are classified as "basic religious activities" by RoRB standards including the ability for a religious group to rent property for religious services. Other benefits of registration include opening a bank account, licensing clergy, establishing a house of worship. Provincialisation – each emirate oversees registration and licensing of non-Muslim religious organisations, and the process differs by emirate, organisation, and circumstance; these procedures are not published by the emirate governments. The federal government has also granted some religious organisations land in free-trade zones, where they legally registered by applying for a trade licence that allows them some operational functions. In Dubai, religious organisations are required to obtain a licence from the CDA, and in Abu Dhabi, from the Department of Community Development (DCD). The governments of the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai also require religious communities to obtain permits for certain activities, including holding public events, collecting donations, and worshipping in temporarily rented spaces, such as hotels. The penal code stipulates an unspecified jail term and fines from 200,000 dirhams ($54,500) for establishing or running an unlicensed house of worship or religious instruction. Federal law prohibits churches from erecting bell towers or displaying crosses or other religious symbols on the outside of their premises, although they may place signs on their properties indicating they are churches. Land ownership by noncitizens is restricted to designated freehold areas. This restriction is an impediment to most minority religious communities, which consist of noncitizens, that wish to purchase property to build houses of worship. Non-Muslim houses of worship are generally built on lands that the rulers of the emirates provided to these communities. The country's citizenship law does not include religion as a prerequisite for naturalisation. Non-Muslim wives of citizens are eligible for naturalisation after seven years of marriage if the couple has a child, or 10 years of marriage if the couple has no children. There is no automatic spousal inheritance provision for wives under the law if the husband is Muslim and the wife is non-Muslim. Such wives may not inherit their husband's property unless named as a beneficiary in their husband's will. The law restricts charitable fundraising activities, including by religious organisations, by prohibiting the collection of donations or advertising fundraising campaigns without prior approval from authorities. The Dubai CDA is the official body mandated to oversee all civil institutions and nonprofits in the emirate, including non-Muslim religious groups. The CDA issues operating licenses and permits for events and monitors fundraising activities. The law states that civil institutions may only collect donations or launch fundraising campaigns after obtaining the CDA's written approval. Fines for noncompliance range from 500 dirhams to 100,000 dirhams ($140 – $27,200). Repeated violations may result in the doubling of fines, not to exceed 200,000 dirhams ($54,500). Authorised religious organisations and charities are eligible to receive tax-exempt status.

Key restriction tools imposed: blasphemy laws, criminalisation of proselytising to Muslims, non-recognition for any religion other than Islam, permits are required by the government to conduct certain "basic religious activities" such as holding public events or worshipping in rented spaces, provincialisation of registration procedures, restrictions on hieroncy (importation of religious items), the government does not provide registration procedures (crypto-registration).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted for converts from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; preapproval; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to proselytise Muslims; preaching restricted); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Establish a reorganised recognition system that has jurisdiction nationwide in order to resolve issues of segmentation; also, this recognition system would be able to extend existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives without discrimination; revoke present laws on blasphemy, conversion and proselytism that restrict expression and declarations of belief; dismantlement of the present apparatus that terminally restricts the ability of non-Islamic and especially non-Abrahamic groups from practicing.

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Conditions of state RoRB

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **United Kingdom is a secular state; state denomination in England (Anglicanism); state privilege in Scotland (Calvinism); theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: United Kingdom (excluding Guernsey, Jersey and Gibraltar) is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; United Kingdom is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration for places of worship – by law, the General Register Office for England and Wales governs the registration and legal recognition of places of worship in England and Wales. Registration is not compulsory, but it provides certain financial advantages and is also required before a place of worship may be registered as a venue for marriages; Humanist marriages continue to be unrecognised in England and Wales.

Key restriction tools imposed: non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than Anglicanism, registration procedures are conducted by each place of worship while registration of religious organisation as a non-profit organisation or charity may be conducted with the Charity Commission.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to the registration of a place of worship); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a formal recognition system to set out provisions for both existential recognition for belief systems, denominations, communities based on a shared belief identity and legal registration for parishes to add to the existent provisions for individual religious buildings; restructure the restrictive laws on nuptial rites, namely making registration of places of worship a prerequisite for a marriage to be legal; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government control but nonetheless reports to government and possesses the same authority as government in its area of speciality, namely the management of the religious recognition system.

United States of America



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **United States is a secular state; the constitutions of 20 U.S. states affirm theism as does the constitution of Puerto Rico.**

Human rights instruments: United States is partied to the ICCPR; United States signed the ICESCR but has not ratified it; United States signed the UNCRC but has not ratified it; United States rejected the UNDRIP; United States voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not required to register with the state or federal government in order to conduct 'basic religious activities'.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, non-recognition for any religion or denomination.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a formal recognition system to set out provisions for both existential recognition for belief systems, denominations, communities based on a shared belief identity and legal registration for parishes to add to the existent provisions for individual religious buildings already in place; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government control but nonetheless reports to government and possesses the same authority as government in its area of speciality, namely the management of the religious recognition system.

Uruguay, Oriental Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Uruguay is a secular state.**

Human rights instruments: Uruguay is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Uruguay voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law does not mandate that religious groups register with the government to conduct what RoRB standards define as 'basic religious activities'. By registering for official recognition and certification with the MEC, religious groups can receive benefits, services, recognition, and tax reductions from the government. Religious groups are entitled to property tax exemptions only for their houses of worship. To receive exemptions, a religious group must apply to and be approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) as a registered non-profit organisation. The ministry routinely approves these registrations, after which the group may request a property tax exemption from the taxing authority, usually the local government. The constitution accords the Catholic Church the right to ownership of all its churches built wholly or partly with previous state funding, except for chapels dedicated for use in asylums, hospitals, prisons, or other public establishments. Foreign religious workers must provide proof of certification from their affiliated religious institution to confirm the applicant's identity and to guarantee financial support of the sponsoring religious group. According to regulations, the state must enforce these standards equitably across all religious groups. A correctional authority protocol regulates religious issues in prisons, including standardising access to religious counseling and religious meeting spaces. Several prisons in the country have a dedicated space for religious practice.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

To become Receptive, establish a reorganised recognition system that has the capacity to provide both existential recognition as well as legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives and at multiple levels of activity; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that works independently of the government to manage the reorganised recognition system; to vest its authority within the agency, the government can establish it but then the government must relinquish its control of the agency afterwards to ensure the agency's autonomy from government and thereby from politicisation.

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Uzbekistan, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Uzbekistan is a secular state**

Human rights instruments: Uzbekistan is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNCRC; Uzbekistan was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Uzbekistan did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that all religious groups register with the Ministry of Justice which can be completed through an online application. Religious groups may not carry out any kind of activity without first undergoing the registration process. The law limits the operations of a registered group to those areas where it is registered. The law criminalises unregistered religious activity; requires official approval of the content, production, and distribution and storage of religious publications; and prohibits proselytism and other missionary activities. Registration requires an organisation to have 50 founding members, must have a permanent presence in eight of the country's 14 administrative units for central registration, present a membership list of at least 50 citizens who are 18 or older, provide a charter in Uzbek with a legal, physical address to the local Ministry of Justice branch, and stipulates all founding members must live in one district or city. It prohibits private religious education. The criminal code distinguishes between "illegal" groups, which are unregistered groups, and "prohibited" groups viewed as "extremist." Organising or participating in an illegal religious group is a criminal offence punishable by up to five years in prison or a fine of 15 to 30 million soum ($1,300 – $2,700). The law also prohibits persuading others to join illegal religious groups, with penalties of up to three years in prison. The criminal code provides penalties of up to 20 years in prison for organising or participating in the activities of religious extremist, fundamentalist, separatist, or other prohibited groups. Charges against alleged members of religious extremist groups may include the stated offences of attempting to overthrow the constitutional order and terrorism. Religious groups applying to register in a specific locality require the concurrence of the Committee for Religious Affairs (CRA), a federal executive-level committee, and the khokimiyat (local government) for preapproval. Groups must submit "letters of guarantee" from the regional branches of the Ministry of Construction, the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service, and the Department of the State Fire Safety Service under the Ministry of Emergency Situations. The law requires electronic copies of the documents affirming that the leading founding members have the religious education necessary to preach their faith. Denominations whose faith does not provide for a system of religious vocational education are exempted from this requirement. All religious groups must report their source of income and obtain CRA concurrence to register. The law also requires that khokimiyats concur with the registration of groups in their areas and that the group present notification from khokimiyat authorities stating the legal and postal addresses of the organisation conform to all legal requirements, including obtaining authorisation certificates from the zoning board, sanitary- epidemiological services, and fire services. After checking the submitted certificates, khokimiyats grant registration permission to the religious group seeking registration. The Ministry of Justice has one month to review and approve, deny, or return the application for revision. The law states registered religious groups may expand throughout the country by registering new locations, maintaining buildings compliant with fire and health codes, organising religious teaching, and possessing religious literature. The law limits the operations of a registered group to those geographic areas where it is registered. Even if it is registered in one area, a religious group may not expand to another area until it completes the registration process there. The law grants only registered religious groups the right to establish schools and train clergy. Individual Muslim clergy members receive accreditation from the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. The CRA oversees registered religious activity. The Council for Confessions under the CRA includes ex officio representatives from 16 registered religions, including Muslim, Christian, and Jewish groups, whom the government appoints to serve as consultants. The council discusses ways of ensuring compliance with the law, the rights and responsibilities of religious organisations and believers, and other issues related to religion. The CRA also monitors internet discussion of religion and reports materials it deems "extremist" to law enforcement. The government must approve religious activities outside of formal worship services, as well as all religious activities intended for children younger than 16, unless those children have been given parental permission. The law requires registered religious organisations to inform authorities 30 days in advance of holding non-routine religious meetings and other religious activities at the group's registered address(es). At the beginning of each year every religious organisation must submit a list of planned meetings to the Ministry of Justice. Any meeting outside of that list would be considered "non-routine." The administrative code requires all registered religious organisations to seek permission from local authorities and then inform the CRA and Ministry of Justice representatives 30 days before holding religious meetings, street processions, or other religious ceremonies occurring outside a group's registered building(s), including activities involving foreign individuals or worshippers from another region. Unregistered groups are prohibited from organising any religious activity. The law punishes private entities for leasing premises or other property to, or facilitating gatherings, meetings, and street demonstrations of, religious groups without state permission. The law also criminalises the unauthorised facilitation of children's and youth meetings as well as literary and other study groups not related to worship. The administrative penalty for violating these provisions ranges from fines of 15 million to 30 million soum ($1,300 – $2,700) or up to 15 days' imprisonment. The law prohibits proselytising and other missionary activities. The criminal code punishes proselytising with up to three years in prison and prohibits teaching children religion against their will as well as efforts to involve minors in religious organisations without parental permission. The law requires religious groups to obtain a licence to publish or distribute religious materials. The law requires official approval of the content, production, distribution, and storage of religious publications. Such materials include books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, leaflets, audiovisual items including CDs and DVDs, and materials posted to the internet describing the origins, history, ideology, teachings, commentaries, and rituals of various religions of the world. The administrative code punishes the "illegal production, storage, import, or distribution of materials of religious content" with a fine of 20 to 100 times the minimum monthly wage (6 million to 30 million soum in 2022), ($540 - $2,700) for private individuals. The fine for government officials committing the same offence is 50 to 150 times the minimum monthly wage, or 15 million to 45 million soum ($1,300 – $4,000). The administrative code permits the confiscation of the materials and the "corresponding means of producing and distributing them." Courts issue fines under the administrative code. In instances where an individual is unable to pay the fine, courts may issue an order garnishing wages. The criminal code imposes a fine of 100 to 200 times the minimum monthly wage (30 million to 60 million soum) ($2,700 – $5,300) or "corrective labour" for up to three years for repeat offenders. The state forbids banned "extremist religious groups" from distributing any type of publication. Individuals who distribute leaflets or literature deemed extremist via social media networks are subject to criminal prosecution and face prison terms ranging from five to 20 years. According to the law, individuals in possession of literature by authors the government deems to be extremist or of any literature illegally imported or produced are subject to arrest and prosecution. The law prohibits private teaching of religion. It limits religious instruction to officially sanctioned religious schools and state-approved instructors. Children may not receive religious education in public schools except for some classes that provide basic information on world religions or the study of national culture in the curriculum. The law permits only religious groups with a registered central administrative body to train religious personnel and conduct religious instruction. Ten madrassahs, including two for women, and a Russian Orthodox and a Protestant seminary have official approval to train religious personnel and provide secondary education. The Cabinet of Ministers considers only madrassah-granted diplomas equivalent to other diplomas, enabling madrassah graduates to continue to university-level education. The law requires imams to have graduated from a recognised religious education facility and to register for a licence with the government. The Muslim Board of Uzbekistan assigns a graduate to a particular mosque as a deputy imam before he may subsequently become an imam. According to government officials and religious freedom activists, clerics from various religious groups who obtained their qualifications abroad may officiate within licensed premises.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, central registration is limited by a geographic quota, criminalisation of unregistration, excessive informational requirements intertwined with a membership quota, localisation of registration procedures, membership quota, multi-registration, nationality quota, non-issuance, preapproval, reregistration is required each time the group wishes to expand to different regions of the country, restrictive procedure of notarisation is a necessary precursor to receiving registered status, the registration benefit "to train clergy" is classified a basic religious activity and so should not be subject to registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; religious materials illegal); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; preapproval from the government required; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the terminally restrictive and repressive regime of laws and policies that restrict all aspects of religious life for citizens and all operations of religious organisations throughout the country; such a dismantlement would first need to take place in entirety in order for any type of new recognition system to be established or reorganised.

Vanuatu, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Vanuatu is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Vanuatu is partied to the ICCPR and the UNCRC; Vanuatu is not partied to the ICESCR; Vanuatu was absent during voting on the UNDRIP; Vanuatu did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration: the government mandates that all religious groups apply for a certificate of registration in order to operate legally in the country. This process involves paying a fee of 1,000 vatu ($8) and obtain final approval of the Minister for Internal Affairs. Registration allows the religious group to maintain a bank account. The penalty for not registering is a fine not exceeding 50,000 vatu ($417).

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, arbitrary enforcement of the mandatory registration order, dual registration, fines for unregistered religious group can reach $470 although this is apparently not widely enforced, government interactions with Christian churches were conducted through the coordinated body of the VVC.

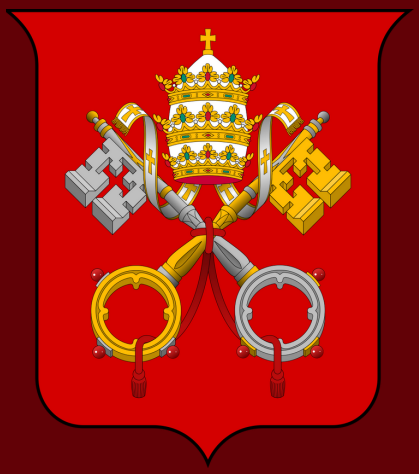
Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free; laws on importation of religious materials remain unclear); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that provides opportunities for both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives in order to be classified as receptive in the Spectrum of Religious Recognition; abolish fines for unregistration, the mandatory registration order and the imposition of dual registration; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that works independently of government control that has the responsibility to manage the recognition system whilst also maintaining the authority that it requires to ensure that decisions of recognition and registration are respected nationwide.

Vatican City State



2023 RoRB Classification: **Ambiguous**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **Catholic theocracy**

Human rights instruments: Vatican City is partied to the UNCRC; Vatican City is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Vatican City did not vote on either the UDHR or the UNDRIP; Vatican City is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: there is no procedure for the registration of any non-Catholic organisation in Vatican City.

Key restriction tools imposed: non-recognition of any religion or denomination except Catholicism.

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Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Venezuela is a secular state**; **state privilege (Catholicism)**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Venezuela is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Venezuela voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: part-mandatory registration – although the government does explicitly state that registration mandatory for religious groups to legally operate without intervention, unregistration is known to bring about stigma and other institutional hurdles. The Directorate of Justice and Religion (DJR) in the Maduro-controlled Ministry of Interior, Justice, and Peace maintains a registry of religious groups, disburses funds to religious organisations, and conducts liaison with religious communities. Each religious group must register with the DJR to acquire legal status as a religious organisation. Registration requires the declaration of property belonging to the religious group, identification of any religious authorities working directly for it, and articles of incorporation. Religious groups are required to demonstrate how they will provide social services to their communities and to receive a letter of acceptance from the regime-controlled community council in the neighbourhood(s) where the group will work. The ministry reviews applications and may delay approval indefinitely. Religious groups must register any new statutes with the DJR. The law provides for Catholic chaplains to minister to the spiritual needs of Catholics serving in the military. There are no known similar provisions for other religious groups.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, dual registration due to the fact that Ministry of Interior, Justice and Peace is involved in registration as are community councils specific to where the group intends to establish its activities, excessive informational requirements (including a letter of acceptance from the regime-controlled community council), localisation of qualifications required for registered status, possibility for indefinite delay as no regulatory interval for the government's review of applications is put in place, reregistration is required whenever the religious group adds any new statutes (such as new objectives), the proposal of new legislation to provide personal details of those to whom a religious group ministers raises concerns over the government's intentions to restrict such activity or to intimidate group members.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a revitalised recognition system that provides opportunities for both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives in order to be classified as receptive in the SRR; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that works independently of government control that has the responsibility to manage the recognition system whilst also maintaining the authority that it requires to ensure that decisions of recognition and registration are respected nationwide.

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Vietnam, Socialist Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Vietnam is a hypersecular state (state atheism); state privilege (Buddhism); official ideology (Marxism-Leninism)**.

Human rights instruments: Vietnam is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Vietnam did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – religious groups are mandated by law to undergo a two-stage registration process called institutionalisation. Completing this process always citizens to gather legally at a specific location to "practice worship rituals, pray, or express their religious faith." Under the law, a religious organisation is defined as "a religious group that has received legal recognition" by authorities. There are two categories of religious or belief organisations recognised in the law: "traditions" or 'officially recognised religious organisations' and organisations with "certificates of registration for religious operation". The law specifies that recognised religious organisations and their affiliates are noncommercial legal entities. The law also stipulates that religious organisations are allowed to conduct educational, health, social protection, charitable, and humanitarian activities in accordance with relevant laws. The government does not allow unauthorised organisations to raise funds or distribute aid without seeking approval and registration from authorities. The law requires individuals to register collective religious practice with communal authorities where the "lawful premises for the religious practice is based," and it prescribes two stages of institutionalisation for religious organisations seeking to gather at a specified location to "practice worship rituals, pray, or express their religious faith." The first stage is "registration for religious operation" with the provincial- or national-level GCRA, depending on the geographic extent of the group's activities. Registration for religious operation allows a group to organise religious ceremonies and religious practice; preach and conduct religious classes at approved locations; elect, appoint, or designate officials; repair or renovate headquarters; engage in charitable or humanitarian activities; and organize congresses to approve its charter. To obtain registration, the group must submit a detailed application with information about its doctrine, history, bylaws, leaders, and members, as well as proof it has a legal meeting location. The relevant provincial GCRA office or the MHA – depending on whether the group in question is operating in one or more provinces – is responsible for approving a valid application for registration within 60 days of receipt. The law requires the relevant provincial GCRA office or the MHA to provide any rejection in writing. The second stage of institutionalisation is recognition. A religious group may apply for recognition after it has operated continuously for at least five years following the date it receives approval of its "registration for religious operation." A religious group is required to have a legal charter and bylaws, leaders in good standing without criminal records, and to have managed assets and conducted transactions autonomously. To obtain recognition, a group must submit a detailed application to the provincial- or national-level GCRA, depending on the geographic extent of the organisation. The application must include a written request specifying the group's structure, membership, geographical scope of operation and headquarters location; a summary of its history, dogmas, canon laws, and rites; a list and the resumes, judicial records, and summaries of the religious activities of the organisation's representative and tentative leaders; the group's charter; a declaration of the organisation's lawful assets; and proof of lawful premises to serve as a headquarters. The relevant provincial people's committee or the MHA is responsible for approving a valid application for recognition within 60 days of receipt. The law requires the relevant provincial people's committee or MHA to provide any rejection in writing. Recognition allows the religious group to conduct religious activities in accordance with the organisation's charter; organise religious practice; publish religious texts, books, and other publications; produce, export, and import religious cultural products and religious articles; renovate, upgrade, or construct new religious establishments; and receive lawful donations from domestic and foreign sources, among other rights. The law provides a separate process for unregistered, unrecognised religious groups to receive permission for specific religious activities by applying to the commune-level people's committee. Regulations require the people's committee to respond in writing to an application within 20 working days of receipt. The law specifies that a wide variety of religious activities require advance approval or registration from authorities at the central or local levels. These activities include "belief activities" (defined as traditional communal practices of ancestor, hero, or folk worship); "belief festivals" held for the first time; the establishment, division, or merger of religious affiliates; the ordination, appointment, or assignment of religious administrators (or clergy with administrative authority); establishment of religious training facilities; conducting religious training classes; holding major religious congresses; organising religious events, preaching or evangelising outside of approved locations; travelling abroad to conduct religious activities or training; and joining a foreign religious organisation. Certain religious activities do not need advance approval but instead require notification to the appropriate authorities. Activities requiring notification include recurring or periodic "belief festivals"; dismissing clergy; conducting fundraising activities; reporting enrolment figures at a seminary or religious school; repairing or renovating religious facilities not considered cultural-historical relics; ordaining, appointing, or assigning religious clergy without administrative authority (such as monks); transferring or dismissing religious administrators (or clergy with administrative authority); conducting operations at an approved religious training facility; conducting routine religious activities (defined as "religious preaching, practicing religious tenets and rites, and management of a religious organisation"); and holding the internal conferences of a religious organisation. The law specifies that religious organisations must follow numerous other laws for certain activities. Religious organisations may conduct educational, health, charitable, and humanitarian activities in accordance with the law, but the law does not provide clarification as to which activities are permitted. In addition, construction or renovation of religious facilities must occur in accordance with laws and regulations on construction, and foreigners participating in religious activities must abide by immigration laws. Publishing, producing, exporting, or importing religious texts must occur in accordance with laws and regulations related to publishing. Legislation requires all publishers be licensed public entities or state-owned enterprises. Publishers must receive prior government approval to publish all documents, including religious texts. By decree, only the Religious Publishing House may publish religious books, although this is not enforced in all cases. Any bookstore may sell legally published religious texts and other religious materials. The constitution states the government owns and manages all land on behalf of the people. According to the law, land use by religious organisations must conform to the land law and its related decrees. The land law recognises that licensed religious institutions and schools may acquire land-use rights and lease or be allocated land. The law specifies religious institutions are eligible for state compensation if their land is seized under eminent domain. The law allows provincial-level people's committees to seize land via eminent domain to facilitate the construction of religious facilities. Under the law, provincial-level people's committees may grant land use certificates for a "long and stable term" to religious institutions if they have permission to operate, the land is dispute-free, and the land was not acquired via transfer or donation after July 1, 2004. The government does not permit religious institutions to exchange, transfer, lease, donate, or mortgage their land-use rights. In land disputes involving a religious institution, the chairperson of the provincial-level people's committee has authority to settle disputes. Parties may dispute the chairperson's decision by appealing to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment or filing a lawsuit in court. In practice, if a religious organisation has not obtained recognition, members of the congregation may acquire a land-use title individually. The renovation or upgrade of facilities owned by religious groups requires notification to authorities, although it does not necessarily require a permit, depending on the extent of the renovation. There are separate provisions of the law that permit foreigners legally residing in the country to request permission to conduct religious activities, teach, attend local religious training, or preach in local religious institutions. The law requires religious organisations or citizens to receive government permission in advance of hosting or conducting any religious activities involving foreign organisations, foreign individuals, or travel abroad. Regulations also contain requirements for foreigners conducting religious activities within the country, including those involved in religious training, ordination, and leadership, to seek permission for their activities.

Key restriction tools imposed: confinement, excessive informational requirements for both recognised and registered statuses, non-specific financial quota for recognised status, preapproval or notification, provincialisation of registration procedures, registered status does not grant a religious group to publish its own literature as this is an activity that may only be conducted by groups that have undergone recognition procedures, "registration for religious operation" is the necessary precursor to applying for existential recognition but is restricted by a five year longevity quota, some of the benefits of registration outlined are classified as "basic religious activities" and so should not be subject to registration.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted, especially for propagational use); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present terminally restrictive registration procedure and the body of laws and policies perpetuating the terminal conditions for RoRB in the country; establish a reorganised recognition system that extends both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems.

Yemen, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitutional declaration and the presidential oath.**

Human rights instruments: Yemen is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Yemen did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration and malregistration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there is no provision in the law for the registration of religious groups. The law prohibits NGO involvement in political or religious activities. The law prohibits proselytising directed at Muslims. By law, the government must authorise construction of new buildings. The law, however, does not mention places of worship specifically. The law criminalises "assaulting the sanctity of faith" and prescribes up to one year's imprisonment or a fine of up to 2,000 rials ($3) to a person who "destroys or misrepresents or profanes a mosque" or other government-authorised religious site or disrupts religious rituals. Malregistration – the ongoing civil war results in the central Yemeni government not having the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the country.

Recognition policy: the constitution states that the president must be a Muslim who "practices his Islamic duties"; however, it allows non-Muslims to run for parliament, as long as they "fulfil their religious duties."

Key restriction tools imposed: apostasy laws, criminalisation of the criticism of religion, non-recognition for any non-Islamic religion or denomination as well as some Islamic new religious movements, proselytising Muslims is prohibited, the importation of religious materials (hieroncy) for propagational purposes is prohibited, the state must authorise the construction of any new buildings in the country (which is presumed to include places of worship and other kinds of religious buildings).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal to convert from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic religious materials illegal); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal to proselytise Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present apparatus of laws restricting all forms of non-Islamic religious practice and belief; blasphemy, conversion and proselytism are all terminally restricted and normativism perpetuates these restrictions which means that more sophisticated means of religious recognition and religious education should be established to resolve issues of normativism; establish a recognition system for the country in order to provide existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives.

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Zambia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Zambia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Zambia did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the law mandates that religious groups register with the government to operate legally in the country. All religious groups are required to affiliate with an umbrella body, often referred to as a "mother body," which gathers individual churches and denominations under one administrative authority. There are 14 mother bodies: seven Christian and seven non-Christian. The Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security retains the discretion to register any religious entity. To register, a group must have a unique name, a recommendation letter from its mother body, and a document listing the clergy's professional qualifications from a "recognised and reputable" theological school, but the government provides no specific definition or list of qualifying institutions. The Office of the Chief Registrar of Societies then conducts a preliminary assessment of the applicant's authenticity and religious purpose as well as a security check. Religious groups must pay a one-time fee of 3,000 kwacha ($170) to establish registration and 100 kwacha ($6) every first quarter of the year to retain it. They are also required to adhere to laws pertaining to employment practices and criminal conduct. The Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security has the legal authority to revoke the registration of religious groups. Grounds for revocation include failure to pay registration fees or a finding by the Minister that the group has professed purposes or has taken or intends to take actions that run counter to the interests of "peace, welfare, or good order." Groups may appeal this finding in the courts. The government has the authority to levy fines and prison sentences of up to seven years against unregistered religious groups and their members. The law provides for privileged tax treatment for public benefit organisations, including religious groups, provided they are established for the promotion of religion, education, and relief of poverty or other distress. The Department of Immigration under the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security has a mandate to approve or deny permits and visas for travellers coming into the country for religious activities. For any foreign clergy entering the country, religious groups must provide their proof of legal registration as a religious group in the country, a recommendation letter from their aligned mother body, and clearance from clergy in the country of origin. This documentation is presented to the Department of Immigration.

Key restriction tools imposed: criminalisation of unregistration leading to possible fines and imprisonment for up to seven years for both group leaders and group members, grounds for deregistration are ambiguous and could easily be misused against religious groups unfavoured by the state, multi-registration, nominal restriction, recognition is granted through a restrictive system of umbrella "mother bodies", registration fee of $210 exceeds the $100 threshold set down by RoRB standards, restrictive qualifications are demanded for registered status.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; possibly subject to registration); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the present apparatus of laws restricting the registration of religious groups; establish a recognition agency to manage the recognition system in a capacity independent of government; this in order for the country to qualify for being dynamic; the "mother body" structure can remain in place but clear and non-onerous procedures must be put in place for alternative belief systems to establish their own mother bodies.

201 Conditions of state RoRB

Zimbabwe, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Zimbabwe is a secular state; state privilege (Christianity); theism is affirmed in the constitution and in the national pledge.**

Human rights instruments: Zimbabwe is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Zimbabwe did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – the law states that religious groups themselves do not need to register with the government, only that their affiliate institutions that operate schools or medical facilities register with the appropriate ministry. Religious groups, as well as schools and medical facilities run by religious groups, may receive tax-exempt status. Income earned by churches and religious institutions from trade and investments, however, is subject to taxes. Religious groups may apply for tax-exempt status and duty-free privileges with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, which generally grants these requests. To obtain tax-exempt status, a group is required to bring a letter of approval from a church umbrella organisation confirming the group's status as a religious group. Examples of approval letter-granting organisations include the ZCBC, ZCC, the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe, and the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority generally grants a certificate of tax-exempt status within two to three days of receipt. The law requires all international NGOs registered as Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs), including religiously affiliated NGOs, to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the government defining the NGO's activities and zones of geographic coverage. The law stipulates international NGOs "shall not digress into programs that are not specified in the MOU as agreed upon by line ministries and registered by the Registrar." Local NGOs, including those that are faith-based, have no legal requirements to sign an MOU with the government but "shall, prior to their registration, notify the local authorities of their intended operations." The law gives the government the authority to "deregister any private voluntary organisation that fails to comply with its conditions of registration."

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, baseless denials of registration (e.g. Humanist Society of Zimbabwe), dual registration, GFOs must follow a different registration procedure to local groups, grounds for deregistration are ambiguous enough to be misused by the state against groups it does not favour, registration procedures are based on a restrictive umbrella body system in which religious groups must achieve a letter of approval from one of the government-approved umbrella bodies and present this letter as part of their registration application to the government.

Basic religious activities

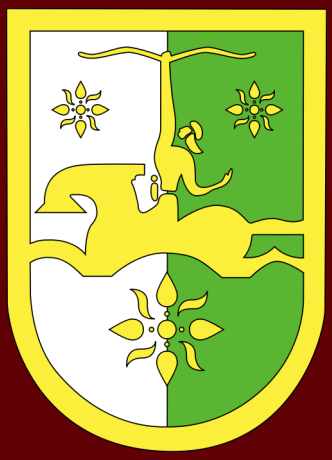
Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a reorganised recognition system that has the capacity to provide both existential recognition and legal registration; the umbrella body structure can remain as long as it is no longer used as a means of restriction and therefore only on the stipulation that it is expanded to include all belief systems to ensure that more diversity is allowed in the country; revoke the dual registration policy and the misuse of broad grounds for deregistration against unfavoured religious groups; to become Dynamic, establish a recognition agency independent of the government that manages the established recognition system.

RoRB BY DEPENDENT OR DISPUTED TERRITORY

Abkhazia, Republic of



Conditions of state RoRB

2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Abkhazia is a secular territory**; **state privilege (Abkhazian Orthodox Church**).

Human rights instruments: Abkhazia is partied to the UNCRC; Abkhazia is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Abkhazia did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP; Abkhazia is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Abkhazia as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses since 1995 although this is not strictly enforced by the territory, some religious figures in Abkhazia continued to support turning the region's Orthodox churches into an autocephalous Abkhaz Orthodox Church, sources said the Russian Orthodox Church tacitly supported the autocephalic ambitions of breakaway churches without seeking formal recognition of their autocephaly from the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC). In Abkhazia, de facto authorities prohibited GOC clergy from entering the region. Most GOC worshippers in Abkhazia were unable to travel to Tbilisi-administered territory to celebrate Orthodox Christmas or Orthodox Easter due to lacking Abkhazia "passports."

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Revoke the prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses and any other form of religious prohibition.

American Samoa



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **American Samoa is a secular territory**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: American Samoa is partied to the UNCRC; American Samoa is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; American Samoa did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in American Samoa as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in American Samoa at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Anguilla



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Anguilla is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Anguilla is partied to the UNCRC; Anguilla is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Anguilla did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP; Anguilla is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Anguilla as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Anguilla at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Artsakh, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Artsakh is a secular territory**; **state privilege (Armenian Apostolic Church).**

Human rights instruments: Artsakh is partied to the UNCRC; Artsakh is neither partied to the ICCPR nor the ICESCR; Artsakh did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP; Artsakh is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: the government mandates that all religious groups register with it in order to conduct 'basic religious activities'.

Key restriction tools imposed: membership quota, non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than the Armenian Apostolic Church, proselytism by minorities has been banned since 2009, unregistration and unregistered religious activity have been prohibited since 2008.

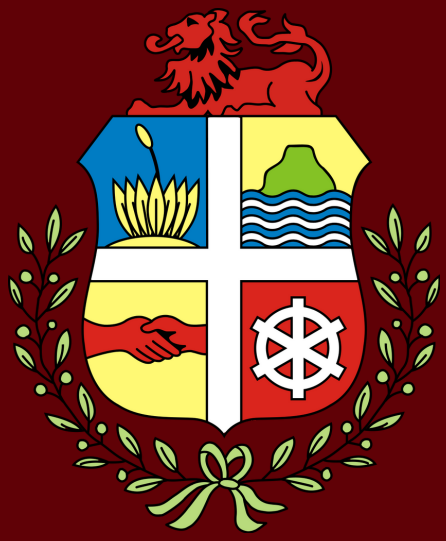
Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Revoke the imposition of a membership quota and the criminalisation of unregistration and unregistered religious activity.

Aruba, Country of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Aruba is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Aruba is partied to the UNCRC; Aruba is also partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR and the UNDRIP via the Netherlands; Aruba did not vote on the UDHR; Aruba is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

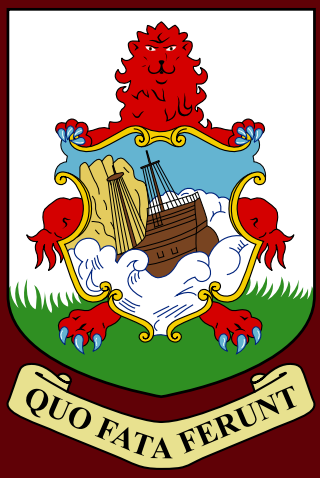
Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Aruba as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Aruba at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Bermuda



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Bermuda is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Bermuda is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP either by its own ratification or via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; Bermuda is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Bermuda as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Bermuda at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

British Virgin Islands



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **British Virgin Islands is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: British Virgin Islands is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP either by its own ratification or via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; British Virgin Islands is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in the British Virgin Islands as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in the British Virgin Islands at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Cayman Islands



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Cayman Islands is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Cayman Islands is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP either by its own ratification or via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; Cayman Islands is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration is not mandatory for religious groups in the Cayman Islands in order for them to conduct "basic religious activities".

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in the Cayman Islands at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Cook Islands



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Cook Islands is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Cook Islands is partied to the UNCRC; Cook Islands is not partied to the ICCPR or the ICESCR; Cook Islands did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: registration is directly controlled by the prime minister.

Key restriction tools imposed: authoritative decree (by way of the prime minister's direct approval of a religious group).

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Revoke the president’s exercise of an authoritative decree.

Crimea, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Crimea is a secular territory**; **state privilege (Russian Orthodox Church).**

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: mandatory registration – the Russian occupying focuses have instituted a mandatory registration policy for religious groups in Crimea that much reflects the mandatory registration order enforced throughout Russia.

Key restriction tools imposed: forced reregistration under new rules which sharply reduced the number of registered groups in the territory, mass deregistration of religious groups, Russia's exportation of worst practice regarding religious recognition and registration procedures.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Denounce the forced reregistration and deregistration orders; denounce the Russian Federation's exportation of worst practice in Crimea on matters regarding religious activity.

Curaçao, Country of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Curaçao is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Curaçao is partied to the UNCRC; Curaçao is partied to the ICCPR and the ICESCR via the Netherlands; Curaçao did not vote on either the UDHR or the UNDRIP; Curaçao is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration is not mandatory for religious groups to conduct "basic religious activities".

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Curaçao at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Eastern Donbas



Donetsk People's Republic



Luhansk People's Republic

2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made in the draft constitutions of both Republics**

Secularity: **Donetsk and Luhansk are both secular territories; state privilege (Russian Orthodox Church).**

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: mandatory registration – the Russian Federation applies its own registration laws in the territory its occupies in Eastern Donbas.

Key restriction tools imposed: mass deregistration, police raids, prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses since 2018, Russia's exportation of worst practice regarding religious recognition and registration procedures.

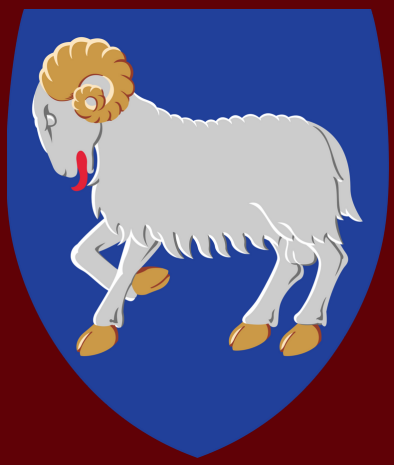
Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Denounce the deregistration order; denounce the Russian Federation's exportation of worst practice into the Donbas on matters regarding religious activity; revoke the prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses and reinstate their right to legally operate in the region.

Faroe Islands



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **state denomination (Lutheranism).**

Human rights instruments: Faroe Islands is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP by way of Denmark; Denmark voted in favour of the UDHR; Faroe Islands is partied to the ECHR by way of Denmark.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration is not mandatory for religious groups to conduct "basic religious activities".

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in the Faroe Islands at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Gibraltar



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Gibraltar is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Gibraltar is partied is the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNDRIP via the United Kingdom; Gibraltar is not partied to the UNCRC; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; Gibraltar is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration is not mandatory for religious groups to conduct "basic religious activities".

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Gibraltar at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Greenland



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **state denomination (Lutheranism).**

Human rights instruments: Greenland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP by way of Denmark; Denmark voted in favour of the UDHR; Greenland is partied to the ECHR by way of Denmark.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

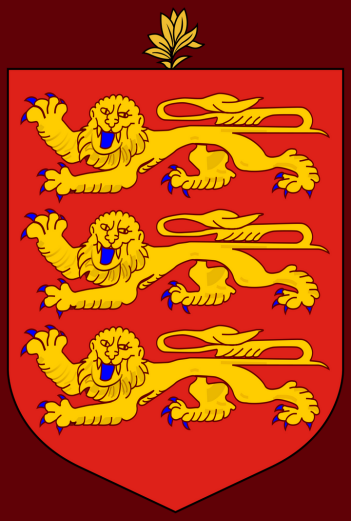
Registration policy: registration is not mandatory for religious groups to conduct "basic religious activities".

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Greenland at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Guernsey, Bailiwick of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Anglicanism)**

Human rights instruments: Guernsey is not partied is the ICCPR, the ICESCR, and the UNDRIP; Guernsey is also not partied to the UNCRC; Guernsey did not vote on the UDHR; Guernsey is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Guernsey as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Guernsey at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Hong Kong is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Hong Kong is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Hong Kong did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not required to register to conduct what RoRB standards classify as 'basic religious activities'. However, registration is a prerequisite for groups to receive benefits such as tax-exempt status, rent subsidies, government or other professional development training, use of government facilities, or a grant to provide social services. To qualify for such benefits, a group must prove to the satisfaction of the government that it is established solely for religious, charitable, social, or recreational reasons. Registrants must provide the name and purpose of the organisation, identify its office holders, and confirm the address of the principal place of business and any other premises the organisation owns or occupies. If a religious group registers with the government, it enters the registry of all NGOs, but the government makes no adjudication on the validity of any registered groups. Religious groups may register as a society, a tax-exempt organisation, or both, provided they have at least three members who hold valid SAR identity documents; the registration process normally takes approximately 12 working days. The Falun Dafa Association is registered as a society rather than a religious group; as a society, it may establish offices, collect dues from members, and have legal status. There are two legal designations for religious groups in Hong Kong: a society or tax-exempt organisation. Groups may also apply for both designations. Government tax regulations provide that any group, including religious groups, involved in activities deemed to endanger national security would not be recognised as a charitable organisation. Religious groups may apply to the government to lease land on concessional terms through Home Affairs Bureau sponsorship. Religious groups may apply to develop or use facilities in accordance with local legislation. The Chinese Temples Committee, led by the Secretary of the Home Affairs Bureau, oversees the management and logistical operations of 24 of the region's 600 temples and gives grants to other charitable organisations. The SAR Chief Executive appoints its members. The committee provides grants to the Home Affairs Bureau for disbursement in the form of financial assistance to needy ethnic Chinese citizens. A colonial-era law does not require new temples to register to be eligible for Temples Committee assistance.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, membership quota, nationality quota, qualifications for registered status are ambiguous.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Due to the ongoing encroachment of the CCP into life in Hong Kong, it is doubtful that the Special Administrative Region will maintain its status of receptive if CCP successfully imposes anything like its own policies on religion in Hong Kong; on this basis, protection of the Basic Law of Hong Kong regarding religious freedom and religious recognition against CCP encroachment is essential as is bringing attention to the ongoing increase of restrictions on civil life in Hong Kong; to maintain its receptivity and to become Dynamic, Hong Kong would need to establish distinct procedures for recognising and registering religious entities anti would need to establish a recognition agency to manage its recognition system independent of the government.

Isle of Man



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Anglicanism)**

Human rights instruments: Isle of Man is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC or the UNDRIP; Isle of Man did not vote on the UDHR; Isle of Man is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in the Isle of Man as of the 2022 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in the Isle of Man at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Jersey, Bailiwick of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Restrictive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State denomination (Anglicanism)**

Human rights instruments: Jersey is partied to the UNCRC; Jersey is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, or the UNDRIP; Jersey did not vote on the UDHR; Jersey is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Jersey as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Jersey at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

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Macao Special Administrative Region



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Macau is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Macau is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP; Macau did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: stipulatory registration – religious groups are not mandated to register to conduct what RoRB standards define as 'basic religious activities'. However, registration does confer legal status which comes with some benefits. Benefits include exemption from taxation (such as property tax, stamp duty, complementary tax [profit tax], and industrial tax) and receiving financial assistance from the government. Religious groups must register with the Identification Bureau, providing the name of an individual applicant and that person's position in the group, identification card number, and contact information, as well as the group's name and a copy of the group's charter. Registered charities receive the same benefits as registered religious groups. Religious groups need to be registered separately as a charity under a different name in order to provide charitable services. The law states that religious organisations may run seminaries and schools, hospitals, and welfare institutions, and provide other social services. By law, religious groups may develop and maintain relations with religious groups abroad.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation, nationality quota, nominal restriction, secondary procedure.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that is able to bestow both existential recognition and legal registration simultaneously and at various levels of activity; revoke the imposed nationality quota, the nominal restriction policy and the secondary procedure within the registration process; to be classified Dynamic, establish a recognition agency that is independent of government to manage the recognition system.

Montserrat



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Montserrat is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the constitution and in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Monserrat is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom favoured in favour of the UDHR; Montserrat is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Montserrat as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Montserrat at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

New Caledonia



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **New Caledonia is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: New Caledonia is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via France; France voted in favour of the UDHR; New Caledonia is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in New Caledonia as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in New Caledonia at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Niue



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Niue is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Niue is partied to the UNCRC; Niue is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, or the UNDRIP; Niue did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

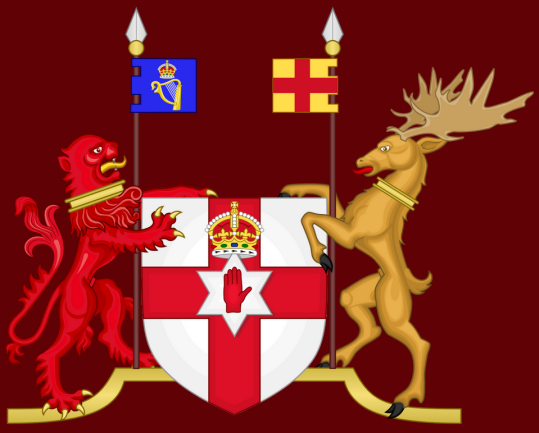
Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Niue as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Niue at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Northern Ireland



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Northern Ireland is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the oath of allegiance.**

Human rights instruments: Northern Ireland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; Northern Ireland is partied to the ECHR via the United Kingdom.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration of religious groups is not mandated by the authorities in Northern Ireland.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Northern Ireland at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Palestine, State of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); state recognition is also granted to the Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Maronite, Melkite Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Syrian Catholic, and Syrian Orthodox denominations; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Palestine is partied to the ICCPR, and the ICESCR; Palestine is not partied to the UNCRC; Palestine did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there is no specified process by which religious organisations gain official recognition. Religious groups are expected to negotiate and ratify their own bilateral cooperation agreements (BCAs) with the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA observes 19th-century status quo arrangements reached with Ottoman authorities, which recognise the presence and rights of various Christian denominations. The PA recognises the authority of the religious groups it has BCAs with to adjudicate personal status matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Recognised religious groups may establish ecclesiastical courts to issue legally binding rulings on personal status and some property matters for members of their religious communities. The PA Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs is administratively responsible for family law issues. The PA maintains some unwritten understandings with churches that are not officially recognised, based on the basic principles of the status quo agreements, including with the Assemblies of God, Nazarene Church, and some evangelical Christian churches, which may operate freely. Some of these groups may perform some official functions, such as issuing marriage licences. Churches not recognised by the PA generally must obtain special one-time permission from the PA to perform marriages or adjudicate personal status matters if these groups want the actions to be recognised by and registered with the PA. The churches may not proselytise. By law, the PA provides financial support to Islamic institutions and places of worship. A PA religious committee also provides some financial support for Christian cultural activities. Although the PA removed the religious affiliation category from Palestinian identity cards issued in 2014, older identity cards continue to circulate, listing the holder as either Muslim or Christian.

Key restriction tools imposed: proselytism is prohibited from all unrecognised religious groups, vertical recognition is in effect (verticalism) due to Islam being the state religion and then some Christian churches receiving bilateral cooperation agreements (with various categories among them) and other groups remaining unrecognised.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic materials intended for propagational use requires preapproval); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; subject to registration); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Dismantlement of the current apparatus of laws restricting reasonable religious activity; establish a recognition system for the country that has jurisdiction over both West Bank and the Gaza Strip to provide both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems and their derivatives and at multiple levels of activity; repeal laws on proselytism, conversion and blasphemy and deconstruct the system of partial recognition that is currently in place even if this requires the disestablishment of Islam as the state religion; remove all subjective language from the law to help reduce arbitrary enforcement.

Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Transnistria is a secular territory**; **state privilege (Moldovan Orthodox Church)**; **Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism are specifically mentioned in law as religions with a historical presence in the region.**

Human rights instruments: Transnistria is partied to the UNCRC; Transnistria is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, or the UNDRIP; Transnistria did not vote on the UDHR; Transnistria is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: mandatory registration – the law requires that religious groups register with the government to conduct their activities legally. The law requires the reregistration of religious groups to operate legally in the region and stipulates groups that failed to reregister by the end of 2010 are "subject to liquidation." The region's registration "authority" registers religious groups and monitors their adherence to the goals and activities set forth in their statutes. Registration provides several advantages to religious groups, including the ability to own and build places of worship, open religious schools, conduct religious services in penitentiary institutions, and publish literature. To register as a religious organisation in Transnistria, a local religious group must present the following: proof of activity in the region for at least 10 years; a list of at least 10 members who are 18 or older who have Transnistrian "citizenship" and permanent residence in one of the seven administrative-territorial units in the region; a list of founders and governing members and their personal details; the charter, statutes, and minutes of its constituent assembly; the organisation's basic religious doctrine; contact details of its governing body; the origin of financial resources for the organisation's activity and other assets; and a receipt indicating payment of the registration fee. Local religious groups may also register as part of a centralised religious organisation, which must consist of at least three local religious groups that have previously registered separately as legal entities. In that case, their application must additionally include a copy of the registration papers of the centralised organisation. Centralised religious organisations must inform the registration "authority" on a yearly basis about intentions to extend their activities to cover additional local groups. Transnistrian "authorities" must decide to register a religious group within 30 days of the application. If those "authorities" decide to conduct a "religious assessment" – a law enforcement investigation of the group's background and activities – registration may be postponed for up to six months or denied if investigating "authorities" determine the group poses a threat to the security or morality of the region or if foreign religious groups, are involved in its activities. Under the "law," foreign religious groups may not register or undertake religious activities. Foreign citizens have the freedom to worship, including with registered religious groups, but they may not be founders or members of religious groups. Religious groups disband on their own decision or upon a Transnistrian "court" decision. The "prosecutor's office" or de facto executive, city, or district authorities may request the "courts" disband or suspend a religious group on multiple grounds. Such grounds include the following: disturbing public order or violating public security; conducting activities deemed to be extremist; coercing persons into breaking up their families; infringing on citizens' identity, rights, and freedoms; violating citizens' morality and well-being; using psychotropic substances, drugs, hypnosis, or perverse activities during religious activities; encouraging suicide or the refusal of medical treatment for religious reasons; obstructing compulsory education; using coercion for alienation of property to the benefit of the religious community; and encouraging refusal to fulfil civic duties. Transnistrian "law" allows the use of private homes and apartments to hold religious services. It does not, however, allow religious groups to use homes and apartments as their officially registered addresses. The "law" also allows such groups to hold religious services and rituals in public places, such as hospitals, clinics, orphanages, geriatric homes, and prisons. The "law" required religious organizations that were active in the Transnistria region before November 14, 2016, to register again with de facto authorities by the end of 2021. Another provision specifies which entities are responsible for different aspects of monitoring religious organisations: the region's "prosecution office" monitors the observance of the "law" on freedom of worship and religious organisations, the registering "authority" makes sure that religious groups observe their statutes, while local "authorities" monitor observance of notification requirements about the initiation or continuation of a religious group's activities. The "law" allows missionary and preaching activities through the media, the internet, or other legal means. Religious organizations or their representatives may practice such activities in religious buildings, places of pilgrimage, cemeteries, educational institutions historically used for religious teaching, and in other public places in line with the "law on public assembly." Religious organisations may hold services with their members in private homes, but proselytising is banned in private homes. Foreign or stateless citizens legally residing in Transnistria may engage in such activities only if the religious organisation involved is registered in the relevant territorial unit. The "law" bans missionary and preaching activities that violate public order or security, promote extremism, harm the traditional family, or harm citizens' health or morality. Proselytising in private homes is prohibited and the legal distribution of religious literature is limited to places of worship or special premises designated by authorities. The law also bans children and youth from participating in religious organisations and religious classes against their will or without the prior consent of their parents or legal guardians. Transnistrian "authorities" screen and may ban the import or export of religious printed materials, audio and video recordings, and other religious items.

Key restriction tools imposed: denial of registration based on religion or belief, Jehovah's Witnesses have faced registration hurdles in the past, limitations on GFO and the religious activities of foreigners, non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than the MOC.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hierarchy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; subject to registration); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to registration); **pastoral services** (not free; subject to registration); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; subject to registration); **religious buildings** (not free; subject to registration); **religious instruction** (not free; subject to registration); **religious literature** (not free; subject to registration); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to registration); **religious trade** (not free; subject to registration).

Recommendations

Revoke the mandatory registration order and the discriminatory denial of registration; revoke discrimination between GFOs and domestic groups as well as the policy of non-recognition for all denominations except the MOC.

Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Puerto Rico is a secular territory**; **theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Puerto Rico is partied to the ICCPR; Puerto Rico is a signatory of the ICESCR (via the United States) but this has not been ratified; Puerto Rico is neither partied to the UNCRC nor the UNDRIP; Puerto Rico did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration of religious groups is not mandated by the authorities in Puerto Rico.

Key restriction tools imposed: amalgamation.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Saint Barthélemy



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Saint Barthélemy is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Saint Barthélemy is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via France; France voted in favour of the UDHR; Saint Barthélemy is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Saint Barthélemy as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Saint Barthélemy at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Saint Martin, Collectivity of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Saint Martin is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Saint Martin is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via France; France voted in favour of the UDHR; Saint Martin is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Saint Martin as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in the Collectivity of Saint Martin at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, Territorial Collectivity of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Saint-Pierre and Miquelon is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Saint-Pierre and Miquelon is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via France; France voted in favour of the UDHR; Saint-Pierre and Miquelon is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Scotland



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Scotland is a secular territory**; **state privilege (Calvinism).**

Human rights instruments: Scotland is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; Scotland is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: **registration of religious groups is not mandated by the authorities in Scotland.**

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Scotland at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish distinct provisions for legal registration and existential recognition of religious entities.

Sint Maarten



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Sint Maarten is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Sint Maarten is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via the Netherlands; the Netherlands voted in favour of the UDHR; Sint Maarten is partied to the ECHR via the Netherlands.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

Registration policy: registration of religious groups is not mandated by the authorities in Sint Maarten.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Sint Maarten at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Somaliland, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Caveated claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Somaliland is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, nor the UNDRIP; Somaliland did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there is no mechanism for either Islamic or non-Islamic religious groups to register with the government. However, religious schools and formal places of worship must obtain permission to operate from the Somaliland Ministry of Religion. Somaliland law does not articulate consequences for operating without permission. The constitution in Somaliland prohibits Muslims from converting, prohibits the propagation of any religion other than Islam, and stipulates all laws must comply with the general principles of sharia.

Recognition policy: the Somaliland constitution requires Somaliland's president and candidates for vice president and the House of Representatives to be Muslim.

Key restriction tools imposed: criminalisation of conversion from Islam, Islamic places of worship must obtain government permission to operate, non-Islamic proselytism is prohibited by the Constitution, and the prohibition of the importation of non-Islamic religious materials.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal to convert from Islam); **hieroncy** (not free; illegal); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal for all non-Muslim groups); **public expression and observance** (not free; non-Islamic expression and observance illegal); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; subject to government preapproval); **religious trade** (not free; illegal).

Recommendations

Abolish the criminalisation of conversion from Islam and other fundamental exercises of freedom of religion or belief such as the repressive laws on non-Islamic proselytism; establish provisions for the existential recognition of religions other than Islam; establish provisions for the legal registration of belief-based organisations other than those of Islamic affiliation.

South Ossetia, Republic of



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **South Ossetia is a secular territory; state privilege (South Ossetian Orthodox Church).**

Human rights instruments: South Ossetia is partied to the UNCRC; South Ossetia is not partied to the ICCPR or the ICESCR; South Ossetia did not vote on the UDHR or the UNDRIP; South Ossetia is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in South Ossetia as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses since 2017, Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) officials stated de facto authorities in South Ossetia pressured Orthodox churches to merge with the Russian Orthodox Church, de facto authorities in South Ossetia declared GOC religious services illegal but permitted them in practice.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Revoke the prohibition of Jehovah’s Witnesses and any other form of religious prohibition; ensure that the Russian Federation’s exportation of worst practice does not continue to take place in the territory to the detriment of RoRB and FoRB conditions.

Tibet Autonomous Region



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Tibet is a hypersecular territory (state atheism); the CCP recognises Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism and Taoism under its framework of patriotic religious associations.**

Mandatoriness of registration: **mandatory**

Registration policy: broad mandatory registration – the central government's Regulations on Religious Affairs require religious groups to register with the government, impose fines on landlords who provide facilities for unauthorised religious activities, and restrict contact with overseas religious institutions. However, only religious groups belonging to one of the five state-sanctioned "patriotic religious associations" representing these religions are permitted to register with the government and legally hold worship services or other religious ceremonies and activities. The UFWD controls the selection of Tibetan religious leaders, including lamas. Regulations stipulate that, depending on the perceived geographic area of influence of the lama, relevant administrative entities may deny permission for a lama to be recognised as reincarnated (a tenet of Tibetan Buddhism), and that these administrative entities must approve reincarnations. The UFWD claims the right to deny recognition of reincarnations of high lamas of "especially great influence." The regulations also state no foreign organisation or individual may interfere in the selection of reincarnate lamas, and all reincarnate lamas must be reborn within China. The CCP maintains a registry of officially recognised reincarnate lamas. Regulations issued by the UFWD allow citizens to take part only in officially approved religious practices; these regulations assert CCP control over all aspects of religious activity, including the managing of religious venues, groups, personnel, and schools. Through local regulations issued under the framework of the national-level Management Regulation of Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries, governments of the TAR and other autonomous Tibetan areas control the registration of monasteries, nunneries, and other Tibetan Buddhist religious centers. The regulations also give the CCP formal control over building and managing religious structures and require monasteries to obtain official permission to hold large-scale religious events or gatherings. The regulations require members of religious groups to seek approval to travel abroad and prohibit "accepting domination by external forces," which authorities say include Tibetans living outside the country, particularly the Dalai Lama. The regulations submit religious schools to the same oversight as places of worship and impose restrictions on religious groups conducting business or investments, including placing limits on the amount of donations they may receive, thereby constraining property ownership and development. Publication and distribution of literature containing religious content must follow guidelines determined by the State Publishing Administration. Publication of religious material must also conform to guidelines determined by the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee.

Key restriction tools imposed: fines on landlords who provide facilities for unapproved religious activities, preapproval by the state of the online activities of a religious group, pseudo-recognition of five religions, restriction of contact with foreign affiliates or the foreign headquarters of a religious institution, the CCP controls the selection of Tibetan Buddhist lamas.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; restricted); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; restricted); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; restricted).

Recommendations

Complete dismantlement of the present terminally restrictive apparatus of laws and policies for religion and belief; however, realistically, such a dismantlement could only take place if a similar reversal in attitudes, policy and legislation was made for China as a whole.

Tokelau Islands



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Tokelau Islands is a secular territory; theism is affirmed in the constitution.**

Human rights instruments: Tokelau is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, or the UNDRIP; Tokelau did not vote on the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in the Tokelau Islands as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in the Tokelau Islands at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Northern Cyprus is a secular territory**; **state privilege (Sunni Islam).**

Human rights instruments: Northern Cyprus is partied to the UNCRC; Northern Cyprus is not partied to the ICCPR or the ICESCR; Northern Cyprus did not vote on the UDHR nor on the UNDRIP; Northern Cyprus is not partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Northern Cyprus as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: Government intervention in the internal affairs of religious organisations; state privilege.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Recommendations

Establish a recognition system that is able to provide procedures for existential recognition and legal registration, procedures which should remain distinct from each other; remove restrictions that are currently imposed on minority religious groups.

Wales



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Wales is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Wales is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via the United Kingdom; United Kingdom voted in favour of the UDHR; Wales is partied to the ECHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-mandatory**

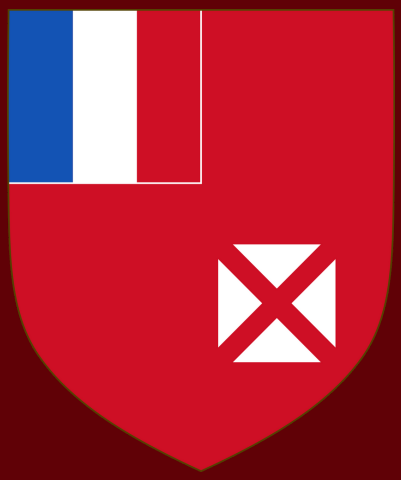
Registration policy: registration of religious groups is not mandated by the authorities in Wales.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Wales at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; subject to the registration of a place of worship); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Wallis and Futuna Islands, Territory of the



2023 RoRB Classification: **Receptive**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Wallis and Futuna is a secular territory**

Human rights instruments: Wallis and Futuna is partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC, and the UNDRIP via France; France voted in favour of the UDHR.

Mandatoriness of registration: **unknown (insufficient data)**

Registration policy: insufficient reliable information exists for registration procedures for religious groups in Wallis and Futuna as of the 2023 GRR Report.

Key restriction tools imposed: insufficient data exists on restriction tools imposed in Wallis and Futuna at this time.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (free); **hieroncy** (free); **monasticism** (free); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (free); **pastoral services** (free); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (free); **public expression and observance** (free); **receiving donations** (free); **religious buildings** (free); **religious instruction** (free); **religious literature** (free); **religious and worship services** (free); **religious trade** (free).

Western Sahara (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic)



2023 RoRB Classification: **Censorious**

FoRB Claim: **No claim is made**

Secularity: **State religion (Islam); theism is affirmed in the presidential oath and oath of office.**

Human rights instruments: Western Sahara is not partied to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the UNCRC; Western Sahara did not vote on either the UDHR or the UNDRIP.

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration and malregistration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no official procedure for legal registration of groups in Western Sahara. Malregistration – any registration procedures conducted by the Sahrawi government would not have jurisdiction across the entire Western Sahara.

Key restriction tools imposed: criminalisation of the criticism of Islam, non-recognition for any religion or denomination other than Islam, prohibition on non-Islamic proselytism and the importation of non-Islamic religious materials with the intention to propagate.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; illegal); **hieroncy** (not free; non-Islamic materials illegal); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (free); **proselytism** (not free; illegal for all non-Muslims); **public expression and observance** (not free; non-Islamic expression and observance illegal); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; illegal for non-Muslims); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; illegal).

Recommendations

Revoke the censorial Moroccan laws that have been imposed such as bans on proselytism, public expression of belief and conversion from Islam; establish a system that extends opportunities for both existential recognition and legal registration to all belief systems; remove all instances of the politicisation of religion and belief and of the registration procedures.

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region



2023 RoRB Classification: **Terminal**

FoRB Claim: **Explicit claim is made**

Secularity: **Xinjiang is a hypersecular territory (state atheism); the CCP recognises Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism and Taoism under its framework of patriotic religious associations.**

Mandatoriness of registration: **non-registration**

Registration policy: non-registration – there are no separate registration procedures for religious groups in Xinjiang. Only religious groups belonging to one of five state-sanctioned "patriotic religious associations" (the Buddhist Association of China, the Chinese Taoist Association, the Islamic Association of China, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association) representing these religions are permitted to register with the government and legally hold worship services or other religious ceremonies and activities. The Regulations on Religious Affairs require that religious activity "must not harm national security." While the regulations stipulate religious groups must abide by the law, safeguard national unity, and respond to "religious extremism," the term "extremism" is undefined. Measures to safeguard unity and respond to "religious extremism" include monitoring groups, individuals, and institutions, and recommending penalties such as suspending groups and canceling clergy credentials. To apply to become an Islamic cleric, applicants first need to submit an "Application Form for the Qualification of Islamic Clerics." In addition, they must provide a certificate of education from an Islamic school, an education certificate from junior high school or above, and a physical examination certificate issued by a designated hospital (including items such as "mental history"). Applicants are also required to submit a household registration certificate and national identification card. The applicant must receive a letter of recommendation written by the Administration of Islamic Activity Sites where the applicant's household registration is located and submit it to the Islamic Association of the province, autonomous region, or municipality after review and approval by the local Islamic Association. Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported authorities continued to ban civil servants, students, and teachers from fasting during Ramadan. In April, RFA reported authorities sent notices to neighbourhood committees in Urumqi and multiple prefectures that only 10-50 Muslims in certain areas would be allowed to fast during Ramadan and individuals observing the fast must register with the government. A local police officer in Kashgar Prefecture's Tokkuzak (Toukezhake) township told RFA the purpose of the registrations was to "allay the fears of [Muslims] who are afraid to fast, in addition to security, because there should not be any misconception about the CCP's religious policy. The Party never said to abolish religion, but to Sinicise it."

Key restriction tools imposed: restrictions on religious attire, state preapproval of all religious activities (such as proselytising, religious instruction, publishing and distributing religious literature) is mandatory.

Basic religious activities

Conversion (not free; restricted); **hieroncy** (not free; highly restricted; preapproval required); **monasticism** (not free; restricted); **nuptial, initiatory and burial rites** (not free; restricted); **pastoral services** (not free; restricted); **private expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **proselytism** (not free; preapproval required); **public expression and observance** (not free; restricted); **receiving donations** (not free; restricted); **religious buildings** (not free; restricted); **religious instruction** (not free; restricted); **religious literature** (not free; restricted); **religious and worship services** (not free; restricted); **religious trade** (not free; illegal).

Recommendations

Not without changes first made in the Chinese heartland will a reversal in these restrictive laws imposed in Xinjiang be practical but the consequences of what the CCP has done in interning innocent citizens into "re-education facilities" and in turning the Uighur society into a police state will likely be irreversible.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Amalgamation: the lack of distinction between registration and recognition, usually in favour of one, in some national recognition systems, causing either a lack of symbolic recognition for religions and denominations or a lack of provisions for the legal registration of belief-based organisations (BBOs).

Basic religious activities: activities performed with religious purpose or based on philosophical belief that are considered central to the practice of religion or belief that their subjection to registration by the state before they can performed is regarded impermissible; the category of 'basic religious activities' currently includes conversion, importation of religious materials (called hieroncy), monasticism, nuptial, initiatory and burial rites, pastoral services, private expression and observance, proselytism, public expression and observance, receiving donations, renting property for religious services, religious instruction, religious literature, religious and worship services, and religious trade.

Malregistration: the situation in which a government does not have the ability to enforce its registration laws throughout the territory it claims, typically due to an ongoing conflict or civil war; malregistration is problematic because it allows for non-state actors to impose their own registration law and undermines the authenticity of a religious group's receipt of registered status.

Mandatoriness: the degree to which state registration is mandatory for religious groups ranging from stipulatory (non-mandatory) to pseudo-mandatory to broad mandatory; conditional and discriminatory forms of registration also exist which are mostly categorised as mandatory.

Non-registration: a government has established no procedures for the legal registration of religious groups, especially as a means of constraining religious activity to state-approved forms.

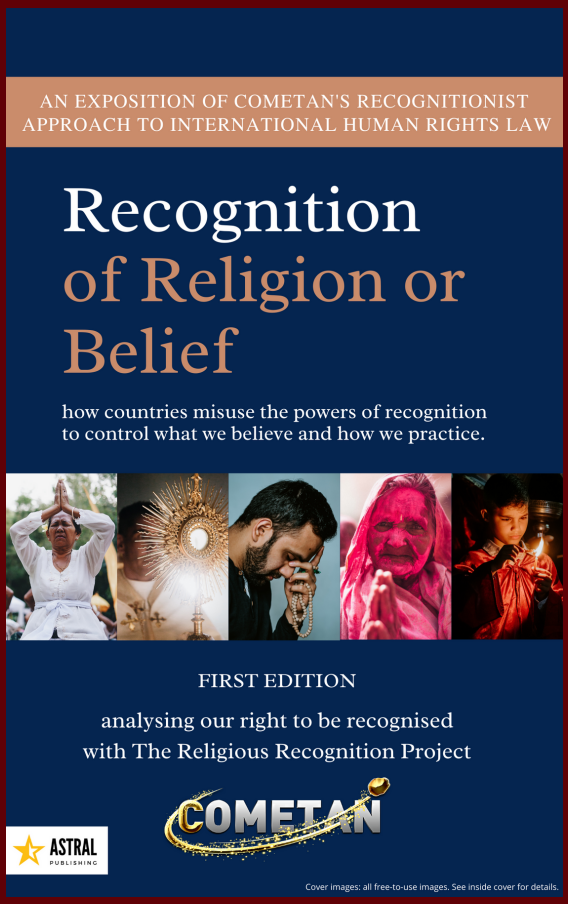
Pseudo-mandatory: denoting the instance in which a government claims that a religious group's registration with it is not mandatory but in fact stipulates that one or more benefits of registration is a 'basic religious activity' that, according to RoRB standards, should not be subject to registration; therefore, the registration in question is pseudo-mandatory.

Registrable religious activities: activities performed with religious purpose or related to the administration of a religious group whose subjection to state registration is considered permissible due to such activities being less intrinsic to religious practice; the category of 'registrable religious activities' currently includes constructing and owning a religious building, tax-exemption, receiving non-monetary donations, the ability to receive state funding, the ability to sign contracts, the ability to open bank accounts, the ability to perform a legal nuptial, funerary and baptismal ceremonies (without a civil representative), and international missionary activity.

State privilege: a specific denomination or whole religion is not established as the state religion but nonetheless receive preferential treatment by the state, especially in the form of exclusive benefits granted that no other denomination receives.

Stipulatory registration: the instance in which a government only states that registration with it is necessary for a religious group to conduct 'registrable religious activities', activities regarded permissible to subject to registration.

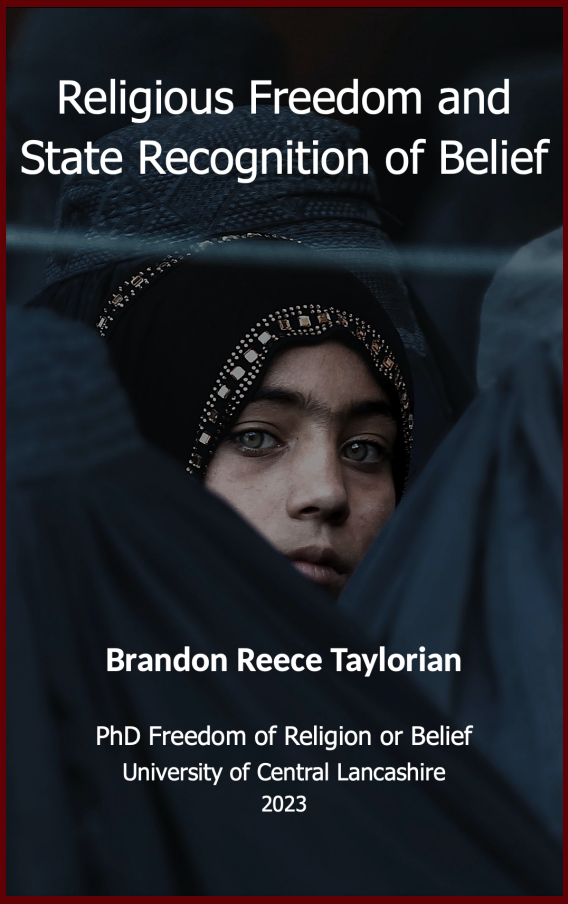
OTHER WORKS



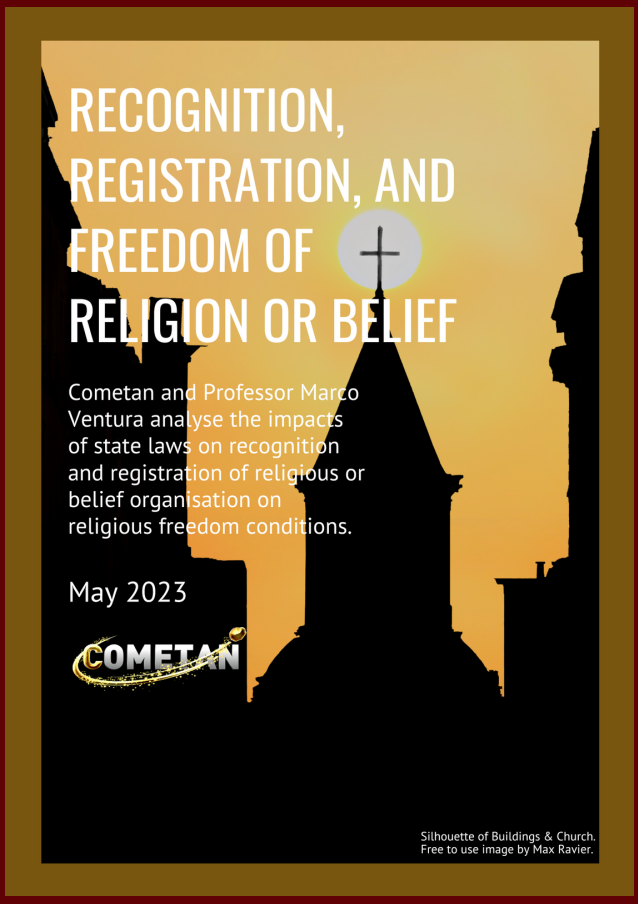
Released in July 2022



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Coming in Autumn 2023.



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