

International Religious Freedom Report 2003 Released by the Bureau of Human Rights, Democracy and Labor

[Preface, Introduction, and Executive Summary <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/c10265.htm>](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/c10265.htm)

[Europe and Eurasia <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/c10268.htm>](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/c10268.htm)

[Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24421.htm>](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24421.htm)

[Appendices <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/c10272.htm>](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/c10272.htm)

Preface

Why The Reports Are Prepared

This report is submitted to the Congress by the Department of State in compliance with Section 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998. The law provides that the Secretary of State, with the assistance of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, shall transmit to Congress "an Annual Report on International Religious Freedom supplementing the most recent Human Rights Reports by providing additional detailed information with respect to matters involving international religious freedom."

How The Reports Are Prepared

In August 1993, the Secretary of State moved to strengthen the human rights efforts of our embassies. All sections in each embassy were asked to contribute information and to corroborate reports of human rights violations, and new efforts were made to link mission programming to the advancement of human rights and democracy. In 1994 the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs was reorganized and renamed as the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, reflecting both a broader sweep and a more focused approach to the interlocking issues of human rights, worker rights, and democracy. In 1998 the Secretary of State established the Office of International Religious Freedom. In May 2002, John V. Hanford, III was sworn in as the second Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.

The 2003 Report covers the period from July 1, 2002, to June 30, 2003, and reflects a year of dedicated effort by hundreds of State Department, Foreign Service, and other U.S. Government employees. Our embassies, which prepared the initial drafts of the reports, gathered information throughout this period from a variety of sources, including government and religious officials, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, human rights monitors, religious groups, and academics. This information-gathering can be hazardous, and U.S. Foreign Service Officers regularly go to great lengths, under trying and sometimes dangerous conditions, to investigate reports of human rights abuse, to monitor elections, and to come to the aid of individuals at risk because of their religious beliefs.

After the embassies completed their drafts, the texts were sent to Washington for careful review by the Office of Country Reports and Asylum Affairs and the Office of International Religious Freedom, both in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. They worked closely with other State Department Offices and the Office of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, who has ultimate responsibility for the Report on behalf of the Secretary of State. As they worked to corroborate, analyze, and edit the reports, the Department officers drew on reports provided by U.S. and other human rights groups, foreign government officials, representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and institutions, and experts from academia and the media. Officers also consulted with experts on issues of religious discrimination and persecution, religious leaders from all faiths, and experts on legal matters. The guiding principle was to ensure that all relevant information was assessed as objectively, thoroughly, and fairly as possible.

The Report will be used as a resource for shaping policy, conducting diplomacy, and making assistance, training, and other resource allocations. As mandated by the IRFA, it also will be used as a basis for decisions on determining countries that have engaged in or tolerated "particularly severe violations" of religious freedom. Countries involved in these and other violations according to the IRFA are not identified as such in this report, but have been and will be engaged independently by the U.S. Government. The Report also will serve as a basis for the U.S. Government's cooperation with private groups to promote the observance of the internationally recognized right to religious freedom.

A Word On Usage

In many cases, the International Religious Freedom Report states that a country "generally respects" the right of religious freedom. The phrase "generally respects" is used because the protection and promotion of human rights is a dynamic endeavor; it cannot accurately be stated that any Government fully respects these rights, without qualification, in even the best of circumstances. Accordingly, "generally respects" is the standard phrase used to describe all countries that attempt to protect religious freedom in the fullest sense. "Generally respects" is thus the highest level of respect for religious freedom assigned by this report.

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Introduction

Americans have long cherished their own religious freedom. More recently, they have also come to cherish their government's advocacy for those millions around the world who suffer persecution for their religious beliefs. President Bush has time and again affirmed the signature priority that advancing religious liberty holds for our nation. From his National Security Strategy's declaration that "We will...take special efforts to promote

freedom of religion and conscience and defend it from encroachment by repressive governments," to his conviction that "successful societies guarantee religious liberty -- the right to serve and honor God without fear of persecution," he has made clear that religious freedom holds an integral place in American foreign policy.

This is in part because religious freedom holds such an integral place in America's history and identity. The American experiment began with many who repaired to these shores in search of freedom to worship, and it continued as that freedom was codified in our founding charters. In the President's words, "It is not an accident that freedom of religion is one of the central freedoms in our Bill of Rights. It is the first freedom of the human soul -- the right to speak the words that God places in our mouths. We must stand for that freedom in our country. We must speak for that freedom in the world."

Indeed, in many respects religious freedom stands as the "first freedom," encompassing other bedrock liberties such as speech, assembly and conscience. Together, these rights constitute the seedbed of democratic development. They encourage not only the institutions and procedures of democracy, such as representative government and free elections, but also the virtues of democracy, including a government and citizenry that value and nurture human dignity. When the United States promotes religious freedom, it is promoting the spread of democracy.

Our own historical record is admittedly far from perfect, yet that very history makes us all the more determined to protect what has been won. It makes us doubly determined to help those millions of people beyond our borders who suffer because of their faith. The ideals that inspired our founding continue to anchor our policies today. We as a nation have always affirmed the principle that our Creator has endowed all people with fundamental rights and freedoms. We hold these rights to be sacred and inviolable. To protect religious freedom is also to protect the other rights inherent in our humanity; to deny religious freedom is also to deny a core principle of our personhood.

Though it is a priority of the United States, religious freedom is by no means our exclusive preserve. The past century in particular has seen a growing recognition by the international community of the universal nature of religious freedom and other fundamental human rights. This awareness has come at no small cost, borne as it was out of the hard lessons wrought by destructive ideologies, colonialism, and world war. Distilled from such suffering came a new appreciation for a common human nature that transcends cultural, racial, religious and other distinctions. This was exemplified in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other seminal treaties. These and other agreements make clear the overwhelming consensus of the world's nations that religious freedom is endowed in all persons and should be enjoyed by all.

This common agreement among the nations forms an effective basis for common action. The United States remains committed to advancing religious freedom by working with like-minded nations around the world. Though differences may persist on other issues in the international arena, protecting the freedom to believe and worship provides a meaningful cause for which we can work together. We have many partners in this cause and will continue to work diligently to find many more.

Promoting religious freedom is of special importance in the ongoing war against terrorism. All too often, countries that violate religious liberty also contribute to terrorism, intentionally or unintentionally. In some cases, those governments that are hostile to religious liberty have also been hospitable to terrorism. In other cases, nations have targeted religious believers, even under the guise of anti-terrorism campaigns, and driven some towards radicalism and violence. Conversely, where governments protect religious freedom, and citizens value it as a social good, religious persecution and religion-based violence find no warrant and little appeal. Such societies not only tolerate religious differences, but many of their members see the exercise of religious devotion as constitutive of human freedom and dignity.

Though international law may uphold it, and though millions of religious believers around the world may desire it, religious freedom all too often remains fragile, neglected, and violated. Many religious believers find themselves forced to worship furtively instead of confidently, or to hold their sacred beliefs in fear and secrecy rather than with peace and security. Many others suffer manifest hardships for their faith, including beatings, torture, detention, imprisonment, or death.

The United States Government remains steadfast in its resolve to stand with the persecuted and to speak out on behalf of those whose governments would silence them. In seeking to prevent or remedy abuses, the first and often most vital step is to ensure that the stories are told, the abuses revealed, the restrictions exposed. This report attempts to do just that. Yet the catalogue of religious freedom worldwide is hardly confined to the negative, and neither is this report. It also seeks to describe positive trends and to highlight improvements.

This, the fifth annual edition of the International Religious Freedom Report, is issued in accordance with the mandate of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act. The report attempts to establish a baseline of fact about the status of religious freedom worldwide, both to illuminate the problems that exist and to provide a primary source for U.S. religious freedom policy. The first four editions have generally been resisted and criticized by violator governments, but hailed by many religious believers, human rights NGO's, and other governments as the standard worldwide reference on religious persecution.

The Office of International Religious Freedom

The Office of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom has now completed its fifth year. The Office has the simple yet daunting mission of promoting religious freedom worldwide. The Ambassador is charged with the responsibility of serving as the principal advisor to the President and the Secretary of State on matters of international religious freedom.

The Ambassador and his staff monitor the worldwide status of religious persecution and discrimination and devise strategies to reduce the abuses. Just as importantly, they develop strategies to promote religious freedom, both to attack the root causes of persecution and as a means of advancing other fundamental U.S. interests, such as protecting other core human rights, encouraging the growth of mature democracies, and furthering the war against terrorism.

These strategies are carried out in a variety of ways, using the range of diplomatic tools available, including both formal and informal bilateral negotiations with foreign government authorities; participation in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe; cooperation with human rights and faith-based NGOs; and meetings with victims of persecution. Often the Ambassador and staff, along with other U.S. officials, engage in direct intervention in particular crises in order to remove people of faith from harm's way or to forestall further persecution.

In all cases, the Office, which is staffed with experienced Foreign Service and Civil Service officers, works closely with its counterparts elsewhere in the State Department, the U.S. Government, and in U.S. missions overseas. U.S. Foreign Service officers abroad form the front line of our religious freedom policy. Many of their activities, and those of the Office of International Religious Freedom, are discussed in Part III of the Executive Summary. Some of their most heroic actions, however, must necessarily remain out of the spotlight in order to protect those involved.

As I continue my term as the second U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, I wish to thank all the employees of the Department of State here and abroad who have made this report possible. In particular, I want to acknowledge the dedicated work of our human rights officers throughout the world, as well as the members of the Office of Country Reports and Asylum Affairs at the State Department, who have worked long and hard to craft this report. I also want to express appreciation for the vigilant and bipartisan support that Congress has demonstrated on this issue. Finally, I wish to thank my own staff in the Office of International Religious Freedom, whose commitment to religious freedom for all people is both indefatigable and inspiring.

John V. Hanford III,
Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom

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2003 Executive Summary

A core American value and a cornerstone of democracy, religious freedom is a central tenet of United States foreign policy. As President Bush has repeatedly affirmed, religious freedom is a key component of U.S. efforts to ensure security, protect stability, and promote liberty. Religious freedom reinforces the development and strength of civil societies, and it dampens the appeal of religious extremism and religion-based terrorism. Moreover, religious freedom is a universal value, not confined to any one region or faith, but recognized in international law and by many religious traditions worldwide.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, declared "the inherent dignity and . . . the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family." The Declaration stated that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind." It proclaimed as one of humanity's highest aspirations the advent of a world in which people enjoyed freedom of belief. Article 18 declared that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." (See Appendix A.)

The Universal Declaration was echoed in other seminal international agreements obligating nations to respect religious freedom, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. (See Appendix B.) Nearly all of the world's governments have committed themselves through these agreements to protect the right of religious freedom for everyone who lives within their borders.

Despite these widely accepted international instruments, however, much of the world's population lives in countries in which the right to religious freedom is restricted or prohibited. Millions of persons live under totalitarian or authoritarian regimes determined to control religious belief and practice. Some regimes are hostile to minority or "unapproved" religions, while others tolerate, and thereby encourage, persecution or discrimination. Still other governments--including thriving and emerging democracies--have adopted discriminatory legislation or policies that give preference to favor some religions over others.

There are some governments that impose gratuitous and burdensome registration requirements on religious groups and forbid the groups from meeting, engaging in worship, or other basic religious activities until they have been registered. This requirement is, by its nature, subject to abuse by local jurisdictions, even in cases where it is designed by central authorities to be applied in a nondiscriminatory fashion. Neither should a legitimate concern over the destructive and unlawful behavior by a small number of groups be employed to discriminate against or stigmatize other peaceful and non-destructive members of the same religious group. This is a particular problem in some countries in Central Asia, East Asia, and the Middle East that place great restrictions on freedom of religion by narrowly defining what is acceptable and officially recognized religious practice. In addition, some Western European democracies have undertaken policies resulting in the stigmatization of minority religions by identifying them as dangerous "sects" or "cults." This is also a concern because some countries in Central Asia and other regions have claimed to model their highly restrictive and repressive registration laws on Western European anti-cult legislation.

In analyzing conditions of religious freedom in countries around the world, this report seeks to document the effects of history, culture, and tradition. A particular religion may have dominated the life of a nation for centuries, making more difficult the acceptance of new faiths that offer challenges in both cultural and theological terms. However,

tradition and culture should not be used as a pretext for laws or policies that restrict genuine religious belief or its legitimate manifestation.

The U.S. Government continues to be greatly concerned by discrimination and violence against persons of all faiths and ethnic groups. Discrimination and violence against any peaceful person of faith violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other international covenants that provide the basis for our advocacy on behalf of international religious freedom.

Anti-Semitism, for example, touches on both religious discrimination and ethnic discrimination, and it continues to be a problem of great concern to the U.S.

Government and the international community. This year's report shows a disturbing increase in anti-Semitism in several European countries. To address this issue, a conference on anti-Semitism hosted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Vienna in June, recognized anti-Semitism as a human rights issue.

Ultimately, each nation's policies and practices regarding religious freedom must be measured against international norms. The United States acknowledges its own responsibility with respect to these norms in the safeguarding and protection of religious liberty.

The Executive Summary consists of three parts. Part I identifies many of the countries where religious freedom is restricted and classifies their actions and policies into five categories. Part II provides examples of nations whose governments have taken significant steps to promote or protect religious freedom, even though serious problems may remain in those countries. Part III lists noteworthy actions the U.S. Government has taken to encourage other nations to promote religious freedom.

Readers should note that some countries are mentioned in more than one part of the summary, according to the type of action or situation being reported. Within Part I, several of the countries could be listed in more than one of the five categories; however, in the interest of brevity, a given country is listed only once, in the category that best characterizes the fundamental barriers to religious freedom in that country

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Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of

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The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was improvement in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The August 13 Framework Agreement, concluded in 2001 to end Macedonia's ethnic Albanian insurgency, contained broad constitutional and legislative reforms focused on greater minority rights. At the beginning of the implementation of this agreement and during the 2002 election campaign, religious issues increasingly were politicized. Following the October 31, 2002, formation of the Government, its

representatives mitigated ethnic and religious tensions. In numerous public settings, officials reduced the level of rhetoric and consistently promoted reconciliation. The absence of provocative actions and public statements by government officials, which characterized the previous government, has improved respect for religious freedom. Additionally, there were no attacks on any churches or mosques during the period covered by this report. The law places some limits on religious practice by restricting the establishment of places of worship and restricting where contributions may be made. The generally amicable relationship among the various religious communities contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialogue and policy of promoting human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has a total area of 9,781 square miles, and its population is approximately 2 million. The country has two major religions: Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Nominally, approximately 66 percent of the population are Macedonian Orthodox, approximately 30 percent are Muslim, approximately 1 percent are Roman Catholic, and approximately 3 percent are of other faiths (largely various Protestant denominations). There is also a small Jewish community in Skopje. Religious participation tends to focus on major holidays or life cycle events.

Numerous foreign missionaries are active and represent a wide range of faiths. Many of these missionaries enter the country in connection with other work, often charitable or medical. Several Protestant missionary groups and members of Jehovah's Witnesses are active.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. However, the law places some limits on religious practices, including the establishment of places of worship and the collection of contributions. As part of the August 2001 Framework Agreement, which ended Macedonia's ethnic Albanian insurgency, the Constitution was amended to include mention of the Jewish community and the Methodist Church. None of these communities has official status or privileges.

The constitutional provision for religious freedom is refined further in the 1997 Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups. This law designates the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Islamic community, the Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish community, and the Methodist Church as religious communities, and all other religions as religious groups. However, there is no legal differentiation between religious communities and groups. In 1999 the Constitutional Court struck down several provisions of the 1997 law, and in practice the remaining provisions are not enforced consistently.

The Government requires that religious groups be registered. The Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups contained a number of specific requirements for the

registration of religious groups that were struck down by the Constitutional Court in 1999. Consequently, there was considerable confusion over which procedures still applied, and several foreign religious bodies experienced delays in their efforts to register. This law tends to favor traditional denominations, registered as communities. Other denominations registered as religious "groups" and had to undergo stricter scrutiny by the Republic Commission for Relations with the Religious Communities, compared to traditional religious communities or organizations. During the period covered by this report, the process remained slow and cumbersome. In practice religious groups need to register to obtain permits to build churches, and to request visas for foreigners and other permits from the Government. During 2002 religious groups were granted legal registration and there were no reports that any groups were denied registration. For example, Campus Crusade for Christ applied and was granted registration by the Commission, with its workers receiving religious visas.

The Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups also requires that foreigners carrying out religious work and religious rites be registered with the Government's Commission on Relations with the Religious Communities. The Government does not restrict or actively monitor new groups or advise the public on them. The Government no longer keeps a count of registered religious groups and communities.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups places some restrictions on the establishment of places of worship and parochial schools. It provides that religious rites and religious activities "shall take place at churches, mosques, and other temples, and in gardens that are parts of those facilities, at cemeteries, and at other facilities of the religious group." Provision is made for holding services in other places, provided that a permit is obtained at least 15 days in advance. No permit or permission is required to perform religious rites in a private home. The law also states that religious activities "shall not violate the public peace and order, and shall not disrespect the religious feelings and other freedoms and rights" of persons who are not members of that particular religion. The Government does not enforce actively most of these provisions of the law but acts upon complaints when they are received.

Several registered Protestant groups have been unable to obtain building permits for new church facilities due to bureaucratic complications that affect all new construction. Churches and mosques often are built without the appropriate building permits. The Government has not taken any actions against religious buildings that lack proper construction permits.

The Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups also places some limitations on the collection of contributions by restricting them only to places where religious rites and activities are conducted; however, in practice these provisions of the law are not enforced.

During the period covered by this report, the Government elected in September 2002 moved away from the previous Government's policy of politicizing religious issues. The new Government has encouraged inter-ethnic and by extension, inter-religious reconciliation. During and after its election campaign and following, the Government has on numerous occasions called for ethnic and religious tolerance; such statements have

been broadcast on television news and in print media. In May Prime Minister Crvenkovski, together with representatives from various religious communities, addressed a conference on tolerance organized by the Holocaust Fund of Macedonia. The absence of provocative actions and rhetoric, which characterized the previous government, has been a significant factor in the improvement for respect for religious freedom.

Children below the age of 10 years may not receive religious instruction without the permission of their parents or guardians. A new law provides for religious education in the schools on a voluntary basis. The Government continues to develop the implementation guidelines.

The law specifies that primary school children must be taught in the Macedonian language, and may not be taught by foreigners, even if the children themselves are foreigners and do not speak Macedonian. Foreigners also are not permitted to operate educational institutions, manage classrooms, or give grades to non-citizens. In September 2002, authorities moved to shut down the Timothy Academy, an evangelical Christian academy operated by foreigners for foreign children. In December 2002, the new Government granted work visas to the school's employees and in June the Academy was granted registration as a nongovernmental organization.

The Law on Religious Communities and Religious Groups specifically allows for foreign citizens to carry out religious activities, but only at the request of a registered religious body. Because many evangelical Christian missionaries wish to conduct religious activities that are aimed at the creation of new groups of believers, rather than at operating through existing churches, some foreign missionaries have chosen to disregard this portion of the law. This approach on occasion has led to difficulties for those missionaries, as the authorities have questioned their actual reasons for entering the country, usually on tourist visas. The Baptist Church registered in country continues to refuse to sponsor Baptist missionaries from churches based in other countries. During the period covered by this report, several missionaries were able to obtain religious worker or other worker visas.

The issue of restitution of religious properties expropriated by the former Yugoslav Government has still not been resolved fully. Some progress was made in restitution of previously state-owned religious property. Many churches and mosques had extensive grounds or other properties that were expropriated by the Communist regime. Virtually all churches and mosques have been returned to the ownership of the appropriate religious community, but that is not the case for many of the other properties. Often restitution or compensation claims are complicated by the fact that the seized properties have changed hands many times or have been developed. In view of the country's very limited financial resources, it is unlikely that religious communities will gain restitution of many of the expropriated properties. Nevertheless, on August 28, 2002, the Ministry of Finance and the Jewish Community reached a satisfactory settlement on the restitution of Jewish communal property after more than 6 years of talks. The Ministry of Finance agreed to return to the Jewish Community three buildings in Bitola, one piece of real estate in Skopje, and bonds valued at approximately \$2.76 million (165 million denars).

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There were no reports of destruction of places of worship during the period covered by this report. However, many places were not fully intact as a result of the 2001 conflict. On August 15, a Sunni Muslim group illegally established an ongoing, armed presence in a Bektashi religious facility--the Arabati Baba Tekke in Tetovo--home to a small, active Bektashi Islamic community, and asserted a claim to ownership of the facility, a hotel, and two restaurants on the property's grounds. The occupying group may have received the tacit support of the then-governing political parties VMRO-DPMNE and DPA; the owner of the restaurants and hotel were reputed to be an opposition supporter. At the end of the period covered by this report, the ongoing ownership dispute between the Bektashi religious sect and the Islamic Community over the Bektashi religious facility remained unresolved. Although armed interlopers had left by year's end under international community pressure, fundamentalist Islamic leaders still held services on the Tekke grounds five times per day.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

The generally tolerant relationship among the various religious communities continued to contribute to religious freedom although it has been tested as a result of inter-ethnic tensions. In November 2002, a U.S. Institute of Peace-sponsored group of visiting U.S. religious scholars met with representatives of the religious communities to discuss the formation of an Inter-religious Council.

In May the Holocaust Fund sponsored an international conference focused on the importance of religious tolerance. Representatives of some religious communities as well as the Prime Minister attended the conference and addressed the gathering.

The religious communities in the country often reflect an ethnic identity. Specifically, most Muslims are ethnic Albanians. However, there are a number of ethnic Macedonians who are Muslim. Ethnic Macedonians contend that they often are associated with the policies of ethnic Albanian Muslims, which they do not support. Societal discrimination is more likely to be based upon ethnic bias than upon religious prejudice.

During the period covered by this report, there was a dramatic decrease in vandalism of religious properties, and there were no reports of destruction of places of worship. In December 2002, two Orthodox churches in the villages of Setole and Otunja, which had already been looted in 2001, were vandalized.

No further progress has been made in investigating 2001 attacks on Muslim places of worship, including the June 2001 attack on the Bitola mosque and the August 2001 burning of the Prilep Mosque.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

During the period covered by this report, the Ambassador and Embassy staff met with leaders and representatives of the various religious communities, as well as with government officials, to address religious freedom issues and support the new Government's policy of ethnic and religious tolerance.

Released on December 18, 2003

Appendices The [International Religious Freedom Report for 2003](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/index.htm)

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/index.htm> was released on December 18, 2003. --

[Appendix A: Universal Declaration of Human Rights](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27234.htm)

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27234.htm> --

[Appendix B: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27237.htm)

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27237.htm> --

[Appendix C: Training at the Foreign Service Institute Related to the International Religious Freedom Act](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27238.htm) <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27238.htm> --

[Appendix D: Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) International Religious Freedom Act \(IRFA\)](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27241.htm) <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27241.htm> --

[Appendix E: Overview of U.S. Refugee Policy](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27242.htm) <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/27242.htm>

Appendix A: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore, The General Assembly, proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
2. No one shall be held guilty without any limitation due to race, of any penal offence on account of nationality or religion, have the any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor be denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration insuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

*Hundred and eighty-third plenary meeting
Resolution 217(A)(III) of the United Nations General Assembly,
December 10, 1948*

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