



Religion

Population

Area

- Christians : **93.1%**
- Agnostics : **4.2%**
- Spiritists : **1.9%**
- Others : **0.8%**

393,000

13,940 Km²

Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

In its preamble, the constitution^[1] stresses respect for Christian values and the rule of law. The constitution also references the supremacy of God and enshrines the rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual. Article 15 of the constitution states every individual has the right to the protection of his or her fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of conscience, expression, assembly and association, always subject to the respect of the rights and freedoms of others and of the public interest, without distinction of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex.

Article 18 respects the right of conscientious objection to military service.

Article 22, s 1 of the constitution states that no one shall be hindered in the enjoyment of their freedom of conscience, including the freedom of thought and religion, the freedom to change one's religion or beliefs, to manifest and propagate them through worship, teaching, practice and observance, either individually or collectively, in public or in private.

Article 22, s 2 states that no one attending a place of education can be forced to receive religious instruction or take part in religious ceremony or observance that is not in the religion they profess without their consent (or that of their guardian in case of minors under the age of 18) no one will be obliged to receive religious instruction, take part or attend any religious ceremony that is not of the religion they profess.

Article 22, s 3 states that no religious body or denomination will be prevented or hindered from providing religious education to its members, whether they receive government subsidies or not.

Article 22, s 4 states that no one can be forced to take an oath against their beliefs or in a manner that contravenes their religion or beliefs.

| Incidents

In the period under review, no violations of religious freedom were reported. Instead, a certain rapprochement between various religious groups was observed. For example, in January 2018 the country's authorities held an ecumenical religious ceremony to mark the anniversary of Majority Rule,^[2] which commemorates the first time the majority of members of the country's House of Assembly were of black African descent.

| Prospects for freedom of religion

The situation remains unchanged.

| Endnotes / Sources

[1] All articles cited are from The Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1973/1973-1080/TheConstitution_1.pdf, (accessed on 5th March, 2018).

[2] 'Majority Rule Service at St. Francis Cathedral this morning ...', Bahamas Press, 10th January 2018, <http://bahamaspress.com/2018/01/10/majority-rule-service-at-st-francis-cathedral-this-morning/>, (accessed 5th March 2018); Bruce G. Raine, 'History of majority rule day', Tribune 242, 7th January 2017, <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2017/jan/09/history-majority-rule-day/>, (accessed 5th March 2018).