



Vincent and The Grenadines

Religion

Population

Area

- Christians : **88.6%**
- Hindus : **3.4%**
- Agnostics : **2.5%**
- Spiritists : **1.8%**
- Baha'is : **1.5%**
- Muslims : **1.5%**
- Others : **0.7%**

110,000

389 Km²

Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

In its preamble, the constitution^[1] states that the nation is founded on belief in the supremacy of God and the dignity of man.

In article one, the constitution specifies that everyone has certain fundamental rights and freedoms, such as freedom of conscience, irrespective of race, place of origin, birth, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others.

Freedom of conscience, thought, religion and worship are inviolable rights in all areas, according to article nine, including teaching, practice and religious observance, whether alone or with others, in public or in private.

According to article nine, except with their consent, no one attending a place of education, in prison or doing their military service shall be required to receive religious instruction or attend religious ceremonies other than those of their own religion.

Each religious community has, according to article nine, the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions.

Finally, article nine declares that no one may be compelled or coerced into taking an oath against, or in a manner contrary to, their beliefs or religion.

Article 26 states that no minister of religion can be elected or appointed as a representative or senator.

A Code of Conduct was issued in 2010 for upcoming general elections. Candidates for the presidency are required to

uphold the highest moral principles in accordance with Christian ethics and are not allowed to use religion to mobilise the support of any individual. They must also respect times when church services are held and not disrupt public worship.^[2]

The Education Bill of 2006 regulates religious matters in education.^[3] Religious education must be part of the curriculum of every public or private school. If a private school is owned or operated by a religious organisation and admits students who do not share its beliefs, the latter may not be required to receive religious instruction or take part in religious ceremonies.

Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost Monday and Christmas are national holidays.^[4]

| Incidents

In October 2017, the Thusian Institute for Religious Liberty thanked and congratulated the country for defending the right to freedom of religion, as part of 38th anniversary of the island's independence.^[5]

According to government sources, churches and local media, there have been no reports of intolerance, discrimination or persecution connected to religious beliefs.

| Prospects for freedom of religion

Prospects for freedom of religion in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are positive. In common with the 2016 report, no incidents have been reported.

| Endnotes / Sources

[1] All the articles cited are from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines's Constitution of 1979, [constituteproject.org](https://www.constituteproject.org), https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/St_Vincent_and_the_Grenadines_1979.pdf?lang=en, (accessed 31st March 2018).

[2] All the articles cited are from the Code of Conduct on 2010 Elections for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Caribbean Elections, http://www.caribbeanelections.com/eDocs/articles/vc/vc_Election_Code_of_Conduct_2010.pdf, (accessed 26th February 2018).

[3] Education Act (Chapter 202), Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation and Information (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), http://education.gov.vc/education/images/Stories/pdf/education_act_cap202-1.pdf, (accessed 12th March 2018).

[4] 'Public Holidays 2018', The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, http://www.gov.vc/images/pdf_documents/public-holidays-2018.pdf, (accessed 4th March 2018).

[5] "Independence Message: Thusian Institute for Religious Liberty", Thusian Institute for Religious Liberty Inc., iWitness News, 26th October 2017, <https://www.iwnsvg.com/2017/10/26/independence-message-thusian-institute-for-religious-liberty/>, (accessed 4th March 2018).