

HAITI AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD

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OUTLINE

OBJECTIVE: to present a picture of what the situation is in Haiti today religious freedom and plurality.

1. THE LAW: Today, there is freedom but there was a period where Roman Catholic Church is the main or only faith recognized by the State. Art. 30 and others of the Constitution.
2. RECOGNITION AND OPERATION: the law of 1978 imposes strict control by the State. The faith has to be recognized and authorized by the State. The entity's representatives, pastors, priests etc have to be registered at the Ministry of Denomination. This ministry falls under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. PLURALITY: there are many faiths which coexist peacefully: the Catholics, the Protestants, the Mormons, Voodoo? Is Voodoo a religion or simply indigenous beliefs? At one time, Voodoo was expressly prohibited by the Constitution. It was labelled as superstition. In 1987, right after the departure of both Duvaliers dictatorship, Father and Son, the constitution prohibition was removed but in a

later version of the 1987 Constitution, that removal was deleted. It is however practiced by the vast majority of Haitians.

4. CULTURAL ISSUES: Haitians tend to be passive when it comes to religious rights and usually the faith's norms, practices are accepted by all. For ex., there has not been any demand of priesthood by women where this is not allowed.