

Leaders claim freedom of religion is unaffected after Samoa becomes a “Christian state”

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The island nation Samoa has amended its constitution to proclaim itself a "Christian state".

According to [local reports](#) all 43 members of the country's parliament voted for the change.

Attorney General Lemalu Hermann Retzlaff denied suggestions that designating Christianity as the country's religion would infringe on human rights.

He said: ""The amendment did not amend, alter or change the rights of individuals within Samoa, to exercise their religious beliefs as they deem fit.

"This individual right is outlined in Article 11 of the Constitution, 'Freedom of Religion' and it remains untouched.

"So while the national religion is now confirmed as Christianity, the individual freedom of religion of all citizens within our nation; remains intact."

The preamble of the constitution now reads ""Samoa is a Christian nation founded of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The Government claimed having a state religion would help avert religious war.

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