



News Item

Religion in Africa: High tolerance for other faiths | Deutsche Welle

By Kate Hairsine

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Photo accessed via Freepik.

According to reporting by *Deutsche Welle* journalist, many African countries exhibit a high level of religious tolerance with Sierra Leone being a primary example.

Similar to Sierra Leone, many other nations in sub-Saharan Africa have a high degree of religious tolerance. This is perhaps contrary to expectations for what is a deeply religious and religiously conservative continent. Africa is one of the most religious places on earth, with 95% of people identifying with a religion, according to a [2020 Afrobarometer survey](#). More than half, or 56%, of the continent's population are Christian, and one-third, or 34%, are Muslim.

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Despite this, many African nations have a deep-rooted

culture of religious tolerance. On average, almost 9 out of 10, or 87%, say they would “strongly like,” “somewhat like,” or “not care” if they lived next door to people of a different religion, according to the Afrobarometer survey.



Photo by Andrew Itaga via Unsplash.

As pointed out by Hairsine, Sierra Leone is a Muslim-majority country that elected a Christian president, Julius Maada in 2023. The country’s First Lady Fatima Maada Bio is Muslim. During her interview with Hairsine, doctoral researcher Julia Köbrich points out that inter-religious families are not uncommon in the country.

“People live in inter-religious families where maybe the father and the mother adhere to different religions. They have friends from various religions, often because they went to the same school and made friends there. But also in other places, there’s a lot of interreligious mixing.”

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Religious tolerance still faces challenges in Sierra Leone, stresses social scientist Julia Köbrich. But communities and society make an effort to advocate for peace and

bring people of different religions together to resolve any kind of conflict – not just religious ones.

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