

Dominica 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Dominica during the year.

There were no credible reports of significant human rights abuses.

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were no reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The constitution provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, and the government generally respected this right. An independent press, an effective judiciary, and a functioning democratic political system combined to promote freedom of expression, including for media members.

b. Worker Rights

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The law provided for the right of workers to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and conduct legal strikes; the government enforced these laws effectively. Workers exercised the right to collective bargaining primarily in the nonagricultural sectors of the economy, including in the civil service. The law prohibited antiunion discrimination.

Penalties for violations of freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike were commensurate with analogous violations such as civil rights violations. Penalties were rarely applied against violators. Employers were required to reinstate workers who filed a complaint of illegal dismissal, which could cover termination for engaging in union

activities, pending review of the complaint. When essential workers conducted strikes, they generally did not suffer reprisals. Employers generally reinstated or paid compensation to employees who obtained favorable rulings by the Labour Division following a complaint of illegal dismissal.

The law designated emergency, port, electricity, telecommunications, and prison services, as well as the banana, coconut, and citrus fruit cultivation industries, as essential, limiting the right to strike in those industries. The International Labor Organization noted the list of essential services was broader than international standards. The procedure for essential workers to strike was cumbersome, involving appropriate notice and submission of the grievance to the labor commissioner for possible mediation. Strikes in essential services could be subject to compulsory arbitration.

The government and employers generally respected freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The government generally enforced applicable laws. Few disputes escalated to strikes or sickouts. A company, a union representative, or an individual could request mediation by the Division of Labour.

Small, family-owned farms employed most agricultural workers, and workers on such farms were not unionized.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

The constitution prohibited most forms of forced or compulsory labor, but the law did not prescribe penalties for forced labor. The law also did not criminalize forced labor except when it resulted from human trafficking. The government effectively enforced the law.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

The law did not establish a universal minimum wage but instead set base wages depending on the category of worker. The average minimum wages were below the poverty income level.

The law provided for overtime pay for work above the standard workweek of 40 hours. The law did not specifically prohibit forced or compulsory overtime. The law required employees to give prior agreement to work overtime and employers to pay overtime wages at a minimum of 1.5 times an employee's standard wage. There were no prosecutions reported for violations of overtime regulations.

Occupational Safety and Health

The law stipulated occupational safety and health (OSH) standards be consistent with international standards. The government proactively identified unsafe conditions. The government did not always respond to

workers' complaints.

Workers had the right to remove themselves from unsafe work environments without jeopardizing their employment, and authorities recommended they first report violations to the Division of Labour. The division had the responsibility to approach the employer regarding the matter. Quarry workers faced hazardous conditions.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The government enforced minimum wage, overtime, and OSH laws. Enforcement was the responsibility of the labor commissioner within the Division of Labour. Enforcement included the informal sector, where workers were not commonly unionized. Inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections. Penalties for violations were commensurate with those for similar crimes such as fraud or negligence. No information was available regarding whether the government applied penalties against violators.

The government stated it held educational sessions, employer consultations, telephone consultations after inspections, and public education campaigns to encourage compliance with OSH and wage regulations.

The informal sector was a significant part of the economy, but credible data on the size of the informal workforce were unavailable. The government enforced labor laws in this sector.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

Disappearance

There were no reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

The law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of persons to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

There were no confirmed reports during the year that traffickers exploited domestic or foreign victims in the country or that traffickers exploited nationals as victims abroad.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or

Punishment

The constitution prohibited such practices, and there were no credible reports government officials employed them.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

Child Marriage

The legal minimum age for marriage was 18, but marriage was permitted at age 16 with parental consent. The government enforced the law effectively.

c. Protection to Refugees

No information was available on the government's cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Provision of First Asylum

The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, but the government did not have a system for providing protection to refugees.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

There was no organized Jewish community in the country, and there were no reports of antisemitic incidents.