IIRF Reports

Fernando Mendes Da Costa and Augusto David Ngola

Religious freedom in Angola

A critical analysis of the proposed law to amend Law No. 12/19, of May 14, in light of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola and comparative law

2025/14

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for Religious Freedom

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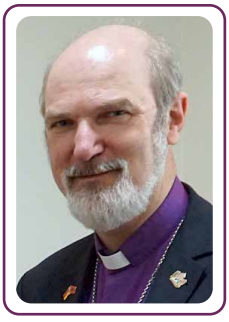

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IIRF Reports Vol. 14—2025/14

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CONTENTS

Abstract

This article critically analyzes the proposed amendment to Law No. 12/19 in Angola, focusing on its compatibility with the Constitution and with comparative legal models adopted in countries such as the United States, Brazil, and Portugal. Based on documentary analysis, empirical data from religious leaders and experts, and legal comparison, the study concludes that the proposed law undermines religious autonomy and violates constitutional principles.

Keywords

religious freedom, church-state relations, constitutional law, Angola, human rights.

1. Introduction

Religious freedom is one of the fundamental pillars of democratic societies, ensuring that individuals and groups can profess and practice their faith without undue interference from the State. In Angola, this guarantee is enshrined in Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic (CRA), which establishes the separation between the State and religious denominations, as well as the right to free exercise of worship. However, the relationship between the State and religious denominations in Angola has evolved in a context marked by tensions and increasing regulatory measures. As explained above, the new proposed Law to amend Law 12/19, of May 14, on Freedom of Religion, Belief and Worship (hereinafter the legislative proposal under analysis), presented in August 2024 to the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola, stands out.

According to the report accompanying the legislation, the initiative aims to organize the constitution of religious denominations in a country where only 77 churches are legalized and more than 2,000 operate in a manner considered irregular. This proliferation has been justified by the government based on factors such as illiteracy, poverty and belief in mystical practices. In Angola, 79 % of the population is Christian, of which 41 % identify as Catholic and the rest belong to different Protestant and evangelical denominations. About 12 % declare themselves to be atheists or have no religion, while the remaining 9 % belong to religious minorities, such as Muslims, animists and Jews (Pew Research Center, 2015).

The legislative proposal comes after political actions such as the extinction, in October 2023, of the ecumenical platforms (CIRA, UIESA, FCA, AIA, ICCA, CONICA), previously responsible for organizing religious practice in the country. The new rules include the requirement of higher theological training for ministers of worship, limitations on places of worship, and criteria that allow the revocation of the recognition of religious confessions for “practices that destabilize society” or for being confused with other denominations. In view of this, this study carries out a critical and comparative analysis of the legislative proposal under analysis, examining its implications in light of the Angolan Constitution

and Comparative Law, particularly the models adopted in the United States, Brazil, and Portugal.

Justification and Relevance of the Study

This research highlights the inconsistencies between the new legislation and the constitutional principle of religious freedom, showing how state intervention can limit the autonomy of religious confessions and compromise the neutrality of the State in matters of faith and worship.

Furthermore, it questions whether the proposal really seeks to regulate religious activity in favor of public order or whether it represents a mechanism of political and ideological control over religious organizations. Comparison with international legal systems shows that democratic countries are able to balance religious freedom and public security without compromising fundamental rights.

Study problem

Therefore, for a critical debate, this work on the limits of state intervention in religion and the need to ensure that legislation respects the constitutional rights and guarantees of Angolan citizens, allows us to raise the following issue*:* to what extent does the legislative proposal under analysis compromise the constitutional principles of religious freedom and international human rights parameters?

2. Objectives

General Objective

- Critically analyze the proposed diploma in light of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola and international treaties on religious freedom.

Specific Objectives

- Identify the main proposed changes in legislation;
- Assess the social, legal and political implications of the proposal;
- Compare the Angolan model with the models of Brazil, Portugal and the USA;
- Obtain the perception of religious leaders and legal experts on the proposal

Research Hypotheses

In light of the problem presented and based on the preliminary analysis of the text of the legislative proposal under analysis, the following hypotheses are formulated to guide the present study:

- The legislative proposal reflects a trend towards centralization and strengthening of state control over religious denominations, through normative requirements that limit the autonomy of faith institutions;
- The implementation of the proposed criteria could compromise the legal and operational permanence of small or recently established religious communities, which face greater obstacles in meeting the required institutional and theological requirements;
- The suggested changes to the legislative proposal under analysis present a potential risk of violating the fundamental right to religious freedom, especially with regard to freedom of worship, doctrinal self-determination and the internal organization of confessions, contrary to the provisions of Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola.

3. Methodology

Type of Study

This research adopts a qualitative approach with quantitative elements, of an exploratory, descriptive and critical nature, using a comparative legal methodology. The study is based on a hermeneutic reading of national and international legislation on religious freedom, accompanied by a field analysis guided by empirical methods.

Research Instruments

Three main types of methodological instruments were used in the present study:

1. Documentary and Jurisprudential Analysis Guide: A systematic scheme was constructed for critical analysis of documentary sources, including:
   - The Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA);
   - Law No. 12/19, of May 14;
   - The Proposed Law to Amend Law No. 12/19 (2024);
   - International treaties and covenants on human rights;
   - Case law of the Constitutional Court of Angola and international bodies. This guide organized the data according to criteria of legality, constitutionality, proportionality and compliance with international standards of religious freedom.
2. Semi-structured interviews conducted with religious leaders and ministers of various denominations, aiming to explore perceptions and practical experiences regarding the impact of the legislative proposal on the exercise of worship and ecclesiastical autonomy. The instrument was based on a flexible script with open questions, allowing narrative freedom and thematic depth.
3. Questionnaire Survey (Google Forms): Applied in two modalities: a) To religious leaders and members of the community in general, with open and

multiple-choice questions; b) To experts (jurists and theologians), through a Likert scale (5 points), aiming to capture the degree of agreement with propositions related to the constitutionality and impacts of the proposed legal change.

Analysis Techniques

1. Documentary and Case Law Analysis: The interpretation of normative and case law documents followed hermeneutic and comparative criteria, focusing on identifying tensions between the legislative proposal and the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and international treaties. The guide was structured in comparative tables, facilitating the visualization of legal contradictions, similarities and incompatibilities.
2. Content Analysis (qualitative data): The semi-structured interviews were subjected to a thematic analysis, according to Bardin (2011), which allowed the identification of central categories, such as: church autonomy, state interference, impact on small churches and freedom of worship.
3. Statistical Analysis (quantitative data): The survey data were processed in IBM SPSS software (version 9.9.0.0), using:
    - Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, standard deviation);
    - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), for comparison between groups;
    - Reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) on Likert scales.

This methodological triangulation—documentary, qualitative and quantitative—gave the study analytical robustness and interpretative validity, allowing the proposed legal change to be examined from multiple perspectives.

Sampling

The sample consisted of 34 participants, carefully selected for convenience and thematic relevance, including:

- Pastors and religious leaders of legally recognized and unrecognized confessions;
- Jurists with experience in constitutional law and human rights;
- Deputies of the Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Religious Affairs and Social Communication, whose legislative activities are directly related to the topic.

4. Theoretical Basis

4.1 Definition of Fundamental Concepts

4.1.1 Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right that guarantees each individual the possibility to freely profess, practice, change or abandon a religion or belief, without coercion by the State or third parties. In the Angolan legal system, it is enshrined in Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (2010), which guarantees freedom of religion, belief and worship, as well as the separation between the State and religious denominations. At the international level, religious freedom is recognized by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and by Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

Authors such as Silvio Almeida (2020) and Rodrigo Vitorino (2022) emphasize that religious freedom is an expression of human dignity and moral autonomy, and is a structuring element of a plural society. Its violation implies risks not only to individual freedom, but to democratic stability and respect for minorities.

The legislative proposal under analysis, as officially presented to the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola, adopts the expression “freedom of religion and worship” as the title and central axis of the legal matter regulated. This expression, although formally valid because it appears in the legislative text, does not accurately reflect the international legal tradition or the most consolidated academic understanding of the concept of religious freedom.

From a technical and legal point of view, this is a redundant formulation, since worship is just one of the expressions of the religious phenomenon, alongside doctrine, personal faith, teaching, proselytism, affiliation and institutional organization (CANOTILHO, 2003; CASANOVA, 1994; UDDIN, 2019). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 18) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art. 18), both ratified by Angola, refer only to “freedom of religion”, implicitly considering all its manifestations.

In this sense, countries such as Portugal (Law No. 16/2001) and Brazil (Constitution of 1988, Art. 5, VI) adopt the terminology “religious freedom” in a consolidated and legal way, covering worship without the need to highlight it as a separate item. The jurist António Vitorino (2007) warns that fragmenting the concept of religious freedom into expressions such as “freedom of worship” can weaken the comprehensive understanding of the law, opening space for restrictive and excessively normative interpretations on the exercise of faith.

Furthermore, it is worth reiterating that religion, as an existential and abstract phenomenon, is not regulable in its essence. What the State can—and should—regulate is only the externalization of this phenomenon in the public space, within the constitutional limits and public order. Therefore, we state here:

> "No one can give me the right to believe, because believing is an abstract phenomenon—and therefore uncontrollable."

This thought highlights that worship does not exist without faith, and that regulating worship without respecting freedom of belief is ultimately equivalent to controlling the act of belief itself. Thus, although this study maintains the use of the expression "freedom of religion and worship" when referring directly to the legislative proposal—out of fidelity to the legal document—it will preferentially and critically adopt the term "religious freedom", as this is the most consolidated in the legal, international, doctrinal and epistemological spheres.

Note: It is recommended that future legislative reviews consider adopting the term "religious freedom" as official legal nomenclature, as a sign of academic maturity, normative systematicity and international alignment.

4.1.2 Right to Worship

The right to worship is the concrete manifestation of religious freedom, encompassing the performance of ceremonies, rites, celebrations and meetings of a religious nature, whether public or private. This right is also guaranteed by Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola and by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

According to Vitor de Souza (2019), the right to worship must be protected even in informal contexts, such as homes and community spaces, and any restriction that is not justified by strictly legal and proportional criteria is unacceptable. Restrictions on the exercise of worship may constitute a direct violation of religious freedom, especially when it is selectively directed at certain confessions.

4.1.3 Universal Fundamental Human Rights

Universal fundamental human rights are prerogatives granted to every human being by virtue of their intrinsic dignity. They are legal guarantees protected by national constitutions and international treaties, and include, among others, religious freedom. In Angola, fundamental rights are provided for in the Constitution of the Republic, namely in Articles 2, 21 and 41.

According to Canotilho (2012), fundamental rights fulfill the function of limiting the power of the State and guaranteeing the integral development of the human person. In the international field, they are reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in UN pacts, and are legally binding for signatory States.

4.1.4 Comparative Law

Comparative law is a methodological tool that consists of the analytical study of different legal systems with the aim of understanding their structures, identifying good practices and proposing improvements to the national legal system.

In this study, comparative law is applied to the analysis of legislation on religious freedom in countries such as the United States (First Amendment of the Constitution of 1791), Brazil (Article 5 of the Federal Constitution of 1988), and

Portugal (Article 41 of the Portuguese Constitution and Law No. 16/2001 on Religious Freedom).

According to Juan Carlos Pérez (2021), the use of comparative law is essential to promote fairer and more effective legislation, especially in contexts of reforms, which is the case of our legislative proposal under analysis.

4.1.5 Secularism and State Neutrality

The principle of secularism imposes on the State the duty of neutrality in religious matters, prohibiting it from favouring or discriminating against any belief or confession. In Angola, although the word "secularism" does not appear expressly in the Constitution, its content is implicit in Article 41 of the CRA, which determines the separation between the State and religions.

Authors such as José Casanova (2019) and Luís Roberto Barroso (2022) state that a secular state is an essential condition for guaranteeing religious freedom and avoiding the imposition of majority dogmas on minorities. Secularism protects both the right to believe and the right not to believe, and is a safeguard for pluralism and democratic coexistence.

4.1.6 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, constitutes the main international normative framework for the protection of fundamental rights. Its Article 18 states:

> "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

This article provides the legal basis for the right to religious freedom and is a mandatory parameter for any national legislation. Its normative value was reinforced by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), which has been binding on Angola since its ratification. According to Asma Uddin (2021), the UDHR represents an ethical and legal compass for all States that seek to balance public security and fundamental rights, especially in the field of religion.

4.2. Historical Perspective: Relationship between State and Religion since Independence

Since independence in 1975, the relationship between the Angolan State and religious institutions has been marked by periods of tension and cooperation.

4.3. Post-Independence Period and Marxism-Leninism (1975–1991)

After independence, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) adopted a Marxist-Leninist orientation, influencing the state's stance on religion. During this period:

- State Distrust: The government viewed religion as a tool of colonialism, especially due to the Catholic Church's association with the Portuguese regime.
- State Controls: In 1978, the MPLA created the National Institute for Religious Affairs, requiring the registration of churches and religious organizations.
- Conflicts with the Catholic Church: In December 1977, Catholic bishops criticized the government for violations of religious freedom, including the nationalization of the educational system and atheist propaganda. The government responded by reaffirming the separation of church and state, but maintained a critical stance toward religious institutions.

4.4. Transition to Religious Pluralism (1991–Present)

With the transition to a market economy and the adoption of a new constitution in 1991, Angola experienced significant changes:

- Recognition of Religious Freedom: The 1992 Constitution enshrined freedom of religion, allowing greater religious pluralism.
- Proliferation of New Confessions: There has been an increase in the number of churches, especially of Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal origin, often without adequate regulation.
- Regulatory Challenges: The lack of regulation has led the government to seek ways to control the emergence of new confessions, aiming to maintain public order and prevent abuses.

The legislative proposal under analysis has generated increasing debate among religious leaders and legal experts in Angola, whose opinions deserve to be highlighted in this study. Among the subjects of these opinions, the issue of the closure of places of worship stands out. On this subject, leaders of unrecognized churches criticized the new law and the closure of places of worship within the scope of "Operation Rescue", arguing that such actions restrict religious freedom. The issue of the legal perspective of the proposal regarding the new features of that legislation is also highlighted. Thus, legal expert Paulo Dange highlighted that the proposed law brings many new features in relation to the current legislation, including a new funding regime for religious institutions and a reduction in the number of signatures required for the legalization of a religious sect, from 120,000 to 60,000.

The legislative proposal under analysis has generated significant debates throughout Angolan society, including among citizens in the diaspora and international voices interested in the protection of fundamental rights. During the brief public consultation carried out by the Government, only six contributions

from the general community were recorded, with no active participation from legal or political experts, which generated criticism regarding its democratic legitimacy (República de Angola, 2025; ANGOP, 2025).

In addition, stations such as Rádio Sublime broadcast podcasts with intense debates between pastors, legal analysts and members of civil society, reflecting the high degree of social sensitivity of the subject (Rádio Sublime, 2025). International agencies such as Deutsche Welle reported on the case, highlighting experts' concerns about the potential violation of religious freedom and the lack of effective dialogue in the formulation of the proposal (DW Africa, 2025). Some critics argue that both the original law and the proposed amendment are unconstitutional, claiming that they are not based on the Constitution. On the other hand, supporters of the proposal claim that the amendments aim to strengthen the country's position in terms of designating entities linked to terrorism and its financing, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Deputy Elizandra Coelho highlighted that the changes in the law stem from Angola's recent evaluation by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), resulting in the need to adjust the law. These debates reflect the complexity of balancing religious freedom with national security and compliance with international standards. Ongoing discussion between legal experts, religious leaders and legislators is essential to ensure that the legislation respects the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Angola.

4.5. Constitutional Foundations of Religious Freedom in Angola: Analysis of Articles 10, 41 and 6 of the CRA

Before beginning to analyze the specific provisions of the legislative proposal under analysis, it is important to consider the constitutional foundations that govern religious freedom in Angola. The Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA) enshrines a set of principles that structure the secular regime of the State and protect the autonomy of religious confessions. Among these principles, the supremacy of the Constitution (Article 6), the secular nature of the State (Article 10) and the protection of religious freedom and worship (Article 41) stand out.

Article 6 of the CRA states that "the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic of Angola" and that all norms, laws and acts of the State must comply with it, under penalty of nullity. Thus, any legislative proposal, such as the one that seeks to amend the legislative proposal under analysis, must be compatible with the material and formal limits imposed by the Constitution. Article 10, in turn, establishes in its paragraph 1 that "the State is secular, separating itself from religious denominations and recognizing their freedom of organization and exercise of their activities". In paragraph 2, it provides that "the State recognizes and respects the different religious denominations, which are free in their organization and exercise of their activities, provided that they comply with the Constitution and the law". This provision enshrines the principle of State neutrality in religious matters, while recognizing that religious freedom is not an absolute right, but rather conditioned on respect for the Constitution and other laws of the Republic. Article 41 expressly guarantees freedom of religion, belief and worship, protecting both the individual and collective dimensions of this right. The provision states that "freedom of conscience, religious belief and

worship is guaranteed under the terms of the Constitution and the law", and that "no one may be persecuted, deprived of rights or exempted from civil obligations because of their religious convictions or practice". This article also reaffirms the separation between the State and the churches, and prevents any type of discrimination or privilege based on religious convictions.

It is also important to distinguish the legal concepts involved: freedom of conscience is broader than freedom of religion, as it protects even those who do not profess any faith. Freedom of belief refers to the individual's inner conviction, while freedom of worship concerns religious practice in public or private spaces. All of these dimensions are constitutionally protected, but require different treatment in legislative matters.

In this context, the legislative proposal under analysis must be assessed in light of these constitutional principles. Its provisions cannot result in disproportionate or arbitrary measures or measures that constitute undue state interference in the autonomy of religious denominations. Such risks become more relevant when the legislative proposal imposes excessive bureaucratic requirements, conditions the exercise of worship to prior authorization or creates officially recognized religious categories. These mechanisms may violate the essential content of the right to religious freedom, as interpreted in light of constitutional case law and international treaties ratified by Angola.

Therefore, any legislative change on this matter must be strictly subordinated to the Constitution and observe the principles of legality, proportionality and respect for human dignity. The legislation under analysis will only be legitimate if it fully respects these constitutional foundations.

4.6. Material Unconstitutionality of the Bill: Legal Reflections

As argued by jurist Dr. Augusto Ngola, the legislative proposal under analysis, if approved in the terms in which it was presented, incurs a defect of material unconstitutionality. The main point of conflict lies in the State's attempt to regulate not only administrative aspects of the functioning of religious confessions, but also the exercise of religious ministry itself.

The State may, within constitutional limits, establish administrative rules that guide the process of recognizing, registering or supervising a church. However, by seeking to define the theological or academic criteria that determine who can be a Minister of Worship, the proposal goes beyond the limits of constitutional legality. As the jurist rightly observes, "the State and the Church do not go hand in hand; they are separate"—and what is responsible for defining a Minister of the Word belongs exclusively to religious denominations and faith, not to the State. By imposing the requirement of higher theological training for the recognition of Ministers of Worship (as provided for in Article 33 of the proposal), the State interferes in dogmatic issues, contradicting the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 10 of the CRA, which enshrines the organizational freedom of religious confessions. The same applies to Article 30, by requiring that statutory changes, internal appointments and ecclesiastical decisions undergo evaluation, annotation or administrative order.

This type of regulation, which goes beyond the limits of administrative control and penetrates the spiritual and internal organization of religions, undermines the principle of secularism and neutrality of the State. It is, therefore, a structural violation of the constitutional model established in Angola, in which respect for religious autonomy is an essential condition for the protection of freedom of worship and plurality of beliefs. Thus, from a legal-constitutional perspective, the proposal presents strong evidence of substantive unconstitutionality.

4.7. Angolan Constitutional Jurisprudence Applicable to Religious Freedom

Although there is still no widely consolidated case law on religious freedom in the Angolan legal system, the rulings of the Constitutional Court have played a crucial role in the interpretation and application of constitutional principles related to religious freedom. The judgments highlighted in this section provide relevant foundations for the critical analysis of the legislative proposal under analysis, especially with regard to the separation between the State and religious denominations, State neutrality and respect for the autonomy of churches.

Ruling No. 871/2024

In this ruling, the Constitutional Court analyzed the unconstitutionality of a decision handed down by the Supreme Court, involving the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the World (Os Tocoístas). The Court established as the object of assessment the violation of freedom of religion and the right to personal identity, based on Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA). The decision emphasized that any judicial or administrative action must respect fundamental rights and that the failure to pronounce on relevant matters may constitute unconstitutionality by omission. This decision reinforces the thesis that the State's action in religious matters must be cautious, avoiding any form of negligence or undue interference. Case law makes it clear that even judicial decisions involving religious conflicts must observe the constitutional limit of the separation between State and faith, reinforcing the need for organizational and worship autonomy of churches.

Ruling No. 111/2010

This ruling dealt with the preventive monitoring of the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Angola. The STF assessed whether the proposal complied with the material limits imposed by Article 159 of the CRA, including the secular nature of the State and the principle of separation between State and churches. The decision reaffirmed that the Angolan State, being secular, cannot subordinate or control religious confessions, under penalty of violating the constitutional text.

This ruling provides a direct precedent for the present analysis, as it indicates that any attempt to subject churches to state criteria for the exercise of religious functions, such as those provided for in the legislative proposal under analysis

(e.g., accreditation, mandatory academic qualifications, interference in statutes and leadership), represents an offense to the principle of state neutrality. Therefore, such measures must be viewed with constitutional reservations, and if implemented in the proposed manner, may be subject to a declaration of unconstitutionality by the Constitutional Court.

In short, judgments no. 871/2024 and no. 111/2010 converge on the understanding that religious freedom is among the pillars of the Angolan rule of law. Both reinforce that the State's actions in this area must be limited, proportional and always subordinate to the Constitution. The legislative proposal under analysis, by attempting to regulate the exercise and structuring of religious confessions in a detailed and invasive manner, is contrary to the spirit and letter of current constitutional case law.

4.8. International Jurisprudence

UN Human Rights Committee (ICCPR)

In addition to national case law, it is important to mention that the principles analyzed here are echoed in decisions by international human rights protection bodies.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Angola, enshrines in its Article 18 the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The United Nations Human Rights Committee, the body responsible for interpreting the ICCPR, has recognized competence to issue decisions with binding interpretative force for the States Parties. In several cases, the Committee has considered that excessive administrative requirements, such as compulsory registration of religious denominations or mandatory accreditation of religious leaders, constitute a violation of religious freedom.

Korneenko v. Belarus (2006)—The Committee stated that making religious services conditional on official registration of religious confession violates Article 18 of the ICCPR. The decision reinforces the understanding that freedom of religion includes the right to manifest one's religion in public or in private, alone or in community, without undue state coercion. This precedent is particularly relevant to the Angolan case, since the law under analysis imposes strict conditions for the legalization and operation of churches, as well as state criteria for the performance of Ministers of Worship, measures that can be seen as restrictive and disproportionate in light of the ICCPR.

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter)

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, also ratified by Angola, guarantees in its Article 8 the freedom of conscience and free practice of religion. Although Angola has not yet recognised the contentious jurisdiction of the African Court, the decisions and guidelines of the African Commission on Human Rights have relevant interpretative value. In communications analysed by the Commission, it has been repeatedly stated that restrictions on freedom of worship must be justified by criteria of legality, necessity and proportionality,

especially in contexts of religious pluralism. Thus, although not binding, these decisions help to understand the African standard of protection of religious rights and contribute to the normative alignment of the Angolan legal system with regional standards.

5. Current Legal Framework of Law 12/19 and Proposal to Amend Articles

The legislative proposal under analysis, presented to the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola in August 2024 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Angola, under the supervision of Minister **Carolina Cerqueira**, includes substantial modifications to the current legislation. This section presents a detailed analysis of the changes brought by the legislative proposal. The scopes of each device analyzed present the same organizational structure to reinforce the pedagogical intention of understanding that we hope for the entire community. The following were considered:

I. Articles explicitly indicated as amended by the legislative proposal

- Article 3—Definitions
- Article 31—Accreditation of Ministers of Worship
- Article 32—Rights and Duties of Ministers of Worship
- Article 33—Training of Ministers of Worship
- Article 43—Application for Registration
- Article 46—Recognition Process
- Article 48—Revocation of Recognition
- Article 53—Prohibition and Closure.

II. Articles that, although not listed in the proposal summary, have undergone relevant changes

- Article 20—Financing of Religious Confessions
- Article 26—Regime and Protection of Real Estate
- Article 30—Freedom of Organization and Administration
- Article 40—Religious Logos and Symbols
- Article 42—Preliminary Procedures for Recognition.

III. New articles introduced in the proposal (BIS Articles)

- Article 33. BIS—Activities of Missionaries in the National Territory
- Article 43 BIS—Exercise of Religious Activity
- Article 45 BIS—Recognition of Religious Confessions Established Abroad
- Article 50 BIS—Termination by Merger or Affiliation

IV. Establishment and Recognition of Religious Associations

This new section introduces a specific legal framework for entities that, although they have religious activities, are not considered religious denominations in the strict sense. It includes specific articles dedicated to the definition, recognition, registration, supervision and termination of these associations. It introduces a **new legal category**, parallel to religious denominations:

- Article X—Definition of Religious Associations
- Article X—Legal Framework for Religious Associations
- Article X—Inspection of Religious Activity

I. Articles explicitly indicated as amended by the legislative proposal

Article 3—Definitions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

Article 3 of Law No. 12/19 contains the basic definitions of the legal instrument, but did not include the classification of religions. It was written with more general terms, such as:

> "For the purposes of this Law, religious confession is understood as an organization formed by a group of people who profess the same religious faith and who, based on a hierarchical structure, develop practices of worship, doctrinal training and solidarity actions."

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

The proposed amendment adds paragraph **n)** to Article 3, with the following content:

n) "Types of Religion" are configured according to their matrix, essence and doctrinal basis, and may be: religion of Christian, African, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Bahá'í, messianic, syncretic origin, among others.

Implications of the Change

- **Official religious classification:** When classifying religions, the Angolan State begins to categorize them according to criteria of "matrix" and "essence", which may open the way for **subjective or ideological interpretations** by the public administration.
- **Risk of exclusion or religious hierarchy:** This definition may legitimize future discriminatory actions in the name of "types" of religion with greater or lesser recognized "essence".
- **Incompatibility with state neutrality:** The insertion of a typological definition compromises the principle of secularism, which demands **absolute neutrality of the State** with regard to faith.

Analysis of Article 3—Inclusion of Types of Religion and Constitutional Implications

The legislative proposal under analysis introduces, in Article 3, paragraph "n", an unprecedented definition of "Types of Religion", categorizing them according to their matrix, essence and doctrinal basis. Although such a classification may seem organizational, in practice it leaves room for a taxonomy that compromises the principle of state neutrality in matters of faith, as advocated by

Article 41 of the CRA. Such interference may justify, in the future, unequal treatment between religious confessions and opens space for ideological control disguised as technical regulation.

Article 32—Rights and Duties of Ministers of Worship

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

The original text of Article 32 of Law 12/19 establishes the rights and duties of Ministers of Worship, especially with regard to their freedom to exercise their ministry, the protection of places of worship and compliance with the laws in force. However, there was no formal distinction between nationals and foreigners regarding entry, stay or the need for accreditation, as we can see in the following summary:

> "Ministers of Worship enjoy the right to freely exercise their religious functions, in accordance with the provisions of the religious confession to which they belong and respecting the legal norms in force."

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposed amendment inserts new points into Article 32, especially **paragraphs 7, 8 and 9**, with significant implications:

Point 7—Angolan Ministers of Worship duly certified by the recognized religious confession freely exercise religious activity.

Point 8—Foreign ministers require a consular visa issued by Angolan embassies, with a verbal note from the competent public entity.

Point 9—The exercise of religious activity by foreign Ministers may only occur with official authorization and accreditation.

Implications of the Change

- **Restriction on the free exercise of religion for foreigners:** The requirement for a special consular visa, prior accreditation and an official verbal note constitutes a high degree of state control over foreign religious leaders, which did not previously exist with such rigor.
- **Institutional discrimination:** The distinction between nationals and foreigners regarding the right to worship contravenes the principle of religious equality, provided for in Article 41 of the CRA, and may violate international treaties to which Angola is a signatory.
- **Potential limitation of international interreligious cooperation:** Churches that maintain links with religious organizations abroad may be harmed by the imposed bureaucracy, affecting exchanges of missionaries, theologians or guest pastors.

Analysis of Article 32—New Legal Structure for Ministers of Worship

The proposal introduces mechanisms for immigration and administrative control aimed at foreign religious leaders, which can be interpreted as a restrictive

measure disguised as institutional protection. Although there is no explicit prohibition, the set of legal requirements represents a practical obstacle to the free exercise of faith, especially in a country where several churches operate with international support. Furthermore, the need for a verbal note from the State for entry and exercise of religious ministry violates, in practice, the principle of freedom of worship and belief, constitutionally guaranteed.

Article 33—Training of Ministers of Worship

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

In the original wording of Law No. 12/19, Article 33 established that religious denominations had the right to train their own ministers of worship, but did not impose specific criteria regarding academic level or direct state control over theological education institutions. In general terms, the law recognized the autonomy of denominations to train their own spiritual leaders.

> "Religious denominations recognized by the State ensure the training of their Ministers of Worship, and to this end they may create and manage their own training centers."

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

The new proposal substantially changes this article by introducing a requirement for higher education in theology, as well as reinforcing the legitimacy of educational centers linked to religious denominations. The new wording states:

> "Religious denominations recognized by the State ensure **higher education** in Theology for ministers of worship, and may create and manage educational establishments suitable for this purpose."

Implications of the Change

- **Mandatory higher education theological education (Bachelor's degree):** By requiring a higher education degree, the new proposal imposes a uniform standard that may exclude religious leaders traditionally trained through non-academic or community pathways. Small churches, especially in rural areas, may have difficulty meeting this requirement.
- Indirect control of theological teaching

Although the proposal maintains the possibility of churches creating teaching centers, the requirement for approval and validation of courses by state bodies could result in a form of control over the educational and doctrinal content.

- Violation of the principle of doctrinal autonomy

The Constitution of the Republic of Angola (Art. 41) guarantees the right of denominations to organize themselves according to their own rules. The imposition of academic criteria can be interpreted as undue interference by the State in the internal life of denominations.

Analysis of Article 33—Academic Standardization of Ministers of Worship

The proposed amendment to Article 33 institutionalizes a logic of theological professionalization that, although well-intentioned, fails to respect the specificities of Angolan religious diversity. The requirement for higher theological education could represent a setback for religious communities that adopt traditional or informal forms of spiritual leadership. Furthermore, it sets a precedent for the State to validate who is or is not authorized to teach or lead, violating the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of doctrinal self-determination of religious confessions.

Article 43—Application for Registration of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

The original text of Article 43 of Law 12/19 established the formal requirements for the application for recognition of a religious denomination in Angola. The requirements included:

- Written request addressed to the competent body;
- Statutes of religious confession;
- List of subscribers (minimum of 100,000 citizens of legal age);
- Description of religious doctrine and principles.

These requirements were intended to ensure a minimum level of organization and institutional identity on the part of religious denominations, although they have already been criticized for their complexity.

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposed amendment introduces new elements and requirements to Article 43, including:

- Declaration of acceptance of citizens' subscription;
- Proof of the existence of places of worship in each province (one or two per province);
- Certificates of theological training of Ministers of Worship (with a bachelor's degree);
- Citizen card as a mandatory document;
- Publication in a notice of the names of validated subscribers.

Implications of the Change

- **Increased barriers to legalization:** The new text introduces a high documentation burden, especially for churches with operations limited to certain regions or without the resources to comply with all administrative requirements.
- **Potential exclusion of emerging religious groups:** The requirement of presence in all provinces, combined with mandatory theological training and strict registration requirements, may make the recognition of smaller denominations unfeasible.

- **Legislative inconsistency regarding the number of subscribers:** Although the proposed amendment was publicly presented as being more flexible—with emphasis on reducing the number of signatories from 100,000 to 60,000—this change is not expressly included in the text of Article 43 of the formal proposal under analysis. This ambiguity undermines legal predictability and creates uncertainty as to the real legislative intention, especially with regard to equal access to the legal recognition process.
- **Disproportionality of administrative requirements:** The high number of subscribers and the requirement for physical locations in all provinces do not reflect the reality of many legitimate religious communities, and may constitute a violation of the principle of proportionality (Art. 2 of the CRA).

Analysis of Article 43—Discriminatory Requirements and Incompatibilities with Religious Freedom

The amendment to Article 43 represents a significant change in the legal recognition regime for religious denominations in Angola, with a strong tendency towards bureaucratization and the indirect exclusion of smaller organizations. By requiring proof of higher theological education, places of worship by province and even a citizen card for founding members, the legislator appears to treat religious denominations as business structures, ignoring their spiritual, symbolic and community nature. Such requirements run counter to the spirit of Article 41 of the Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom without distinction between large and small denominations. Religious plurality requires a more inclusive and proportional regime, capable of recognizing the diversity of organizational forms in the religious field.

Article 46—Recognition of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

Article 46 of Law No. 12/19 deals with the process of recognition of religious denominations by the Angolan State. It establishes the formal requirements for the application, such as the presentation of statutes, a list of subscribers and elements proving the religious nature of the entity. However, the original wording did not impose such strict criteria regarding territorial distribution or the formation of ministers.

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposed amendment introduces several additional requirements to the recognition process, with emphasis on the new paragraphs:

- **h)** Declaration of acceptance of subscription by Angolan citizens or resident foreigners;
- **i)** Proof of the existence, in each of the provinces, of one or two suitable places of worship;
- **j)** Qualification that attests to the proven theological training of ministers of worship, to the academic degree of a degree in Theology.

Furthermore, it determines that the status of foreign denominations must adapt to the cultural and legal reality of Angola (n.º 2), and that the public administration may request additional information on doctrine and practices (n.º 3).

Implications of the Amendment

- **Requirement for massive national presence:** The obligation to prove places of worship in all provinces (paragraph i) imposes an almost insurmountable barrier for small or emerging religious denominations, especially in rural and economically limited contexts.
- **Control of the formation of ministers:** By requiring higher theological training (paragraph j), the proposal makes religious recognition conditional on formal qualification, which may exclude religious traditions that are not academically structured.
- **Violation of freedom of organization:** The new text allows the State to interfere not only in the existence, but also in the territorial extension and internal structure of confessions, violating the freedom of organization and worship guaranteed in Article 41 of the CRA.

Analysis of Article 46—Territorial Expansion and Control over Religious Formation

The new requirements of Article 46 indicate a considerable advance by the State over the internal life of religious denominations. By making recognition conditional on physical presence in all provinces and formal theological training, the State begins to act as an agent of doctrinal and territorial certification. This contradicts the principle of State neutrality in matters of religion and imposes bureaucratic criteria that favour large institutions and exclude minority religious groups, contravening the constitutionally guaranteed pluralism.

Article 48—Revocation of Recognition of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

In the original version of Law 12/19, Article 48 already provided for the possibility of revoking the legal recognition of a religious denomination in exceptional cases, but it was limited to objective and less extensive grounds, such as document fraud or practices incompatible with legality. It did not, however, include broad subjective criteria such as "social disruption" or "noise pollution". The text states:

> "The recognition of a religious denomination may be revoked when it is proven that it acts outside the declared religious purposes, practices acts contrary to public order or violates legal norms."

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposed amendment introduces an extensive list of grounds that may justify revocation of recognition, including:

- **k) Rental** /transfer of recognition document;

- **l)** Support for illegal activities of other unrecognized faiths;
- **m)** Repeated practice of noise pollution;
- **n)** Domestic violence;
- **o)** Abuse against minors and the elderly;
- **p)** Witchcraft practices against minors and the elderly;
- **q)** "Doctrinal practices, rites and rituals that result in family breakdown and social destabilization";
- **r)** Healing practices and hospital admission;
- **s)** False imprisonment.

Implications of the Change

- **Expansion of subjective criteria:** The concept of "family breakdown" or "social destabilization" does not have a clear legal definition, which leaves room for arbitrary interpretations by the State.
- **Violation of the principle of legality and religious freedom:** The Angolan Constitution, in Article 41, protects freedom of belief and the autonomy of religious denominations. The proposal allows for revocation based on cultural, liturgical or interpretative behaviors that may be legitimate within certain religious traditions, but which are now treated as legal infractions.
- **Risk of ideological censorship and repression:** The new wording allows liturgical or doctrinal practices, even if not criminal, to be labeled as threatening, discouraging the plurality of religious manifestations.

Analysis of Article 48—Subjective Criteria and Risk of State Arbitrariness

The reformulation of Article 48 profoundly transforms the spirit of Law 12/19, leaving aside a model of minimal and objective regulation and establishing expanded control, with openly subjective criteria. This measure may serve as a pretext for the dissolution of religious confessions that express minority theological views, not aligned with the cultural ideal promoted by the State. This is incompatible with the principles of secularism, religious plurality and freedom of conscience, pillars of Article 41 of the CRA and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If approved without safeguards, this amendment could legitimize religious persecution and weaken the country's legal credibility before the international community.

Article 53—Prohibition and Closure of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

The original text of Article 53 of Law 12/19 established the legal basis for the prohibition or closure of places of worship or religious activities, but with more objective criteria and linked to specific legal violations, such as disrespect for public order, national security or human rights. It did not contain broad or subjective provisions such as "internal conflicts" or "social disruption".

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

The proposal introduces significant changes to Article 53 by adding the following paragraphs:

- d) The religious confession is pursuing doctrinal aims contrary to those for which it obtained de facto legal recognition;
- e) The religious confession is experiencing an internal conflict of leadership, designation and ownership, likely to result in split and dismemberment.

Implications of the Change

- **Subjective and broad criteria:** The inclusion of "contrary doctrinal purposes" or "internal conflict" as grounds for closure institutionalizes a mechanism for State interference in internal matters of religious confessions, such as management and leadership succession.
- **Violation of the principle of freedom of religious organization:** The Constitution of the Republic of Angola, in Article 41, guarantees the right of religious denominations to self-organization. The proposal allows the State to intervene and even close churches based on internal disputes common to institutional life.
- **Legal uncertainty and risk of political instrumentalization:** The breadth of terms used could open the way for the government to close churches for political reasons, especially in cases of internal dissent that do not pose objective risks to public order.

Analysis of Article 53—Criteria for Prohibition and Violation of Religious Autonomy

The proposed changes to Article 53 of Law 12/19 significantly expand the State's power to intervene in the internal life of religious denominations. By considering "leadership conflicts" or "contrary doctrinal aims" as sufficient grounds for banning, the law threatens the legal stability of religious communities and violates the principle of freedom of belief and organization provided for in the CRA. These changes represent a setback in the fundamental right to religious freedom, opening the way for a system of ideological and administrative surveillance over faith, incompatible with constitutional and international human rights standards.

II. Articles that, although not listed in the proposal summary, have undergone relevant changes

Article 20—Financing of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

The original text of Article 20 of Law No. 12/19 deals with the sources of funding for religious denominations, recognizing their autonomy to raise their own funds, both from members of the faithful and from legitimate activities. How-

ever, it did not include any mention of the possibility of public funding or direct benefits from the State.

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposal inserts a **new point 5** in Article 20:

> "Religious denominations can also finance themselves through income from their social projects, as well as benefit from budgetary allocations from the State."

Implications of the Amendment

- **Introduction of direct public funding:** The new wording allows religious denominations to receive funds from the State budget, something that was not previously permitted or foreseen. This represents a significant change in the relationship between the State and Religions in Angola.
- **Risk to State neutrality:** The granting of budgetary allocations may compromise the State's impartiality in relation to the various religious confessions, potentially favouring some to the detriment of others.
- **Possible financial dependence:** This measure may generate dependence on state support by churches, affecting their institutional independence and weakening the principle of separation between Church and State provided for in Article 41 of the CRA.

Analysis of Article 20—State Financing and Secularism

The amendment to Article 20 introduces express permission for churches and religious denominations to receive financial support from the State, through budgetary allocations. Although this mechanism can strengthen social projects with a positive public impact, it raises **serious concerns regarding the secularity of the State**, compromising the principle of separation enshrined in Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola. Furthermore, the absence of clear criteria for the allocation of these allocations can generate conflicts, perceptions of favoritism and even **politicization of faith**.

Article 26—Regime and Protection of Real Estate

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

In its original wording, Article 26 of Law No. 12/19 establishes the legal regime applicable to real estate used by religious denominations for the practice of worship, ensuring their protection against invasions and misuse. There is, however, no specific mention of the prohibition of worship in residential or non-conventional spaces.

> "Legally recognized religious denominations enjoy the protection of the State with regard to the integrity of their real estate assets intended for worship and religious assistance."

*(**Explanatory note Methodological:** The legislative proposal under analysis presents the new text for Article 26, but omits the original wording, making it*

impossible to directly compare the document analyzed. However, to ensure analytical rigor, the original wording was consulted directly in Law No. 12/19. Thus, the following analysis is based on the proposed content, without disregarding the normative elements of the device currently in force.)

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The new proposal introduces **items 5 and 6** to Article 26, with the following contents:

- **Point 5:** "The body responsible for religious activities determines the suspension of religious and worship activities carried out in unsuitable places such as residences, backyards, apartments, warehouses, etc."
- **Point 6:** "Religious and worship activities that generate noise pollution and practices that undermine public order and morals, social peace, and that are likely to create constraints on freedom of movement or violate legal rules, are subject to liability under applicable legislation."

Implications of the Change

- **Restriction on freedom of worship in informal places:** The addition of points 5 and 6 introduces an **explicit prohibition** on worship in alternative environments (such as homes and backyards), which directly affects community churches, in the implementation phase or with limited resources.
- **Openness to subjective and abusive interpretations:** Terms such as "inappropriate places" or "practices that violate public morality" are broad and poorly defined, which leaves room for arbitrary and discriminatory decisions by public authorities.
- **Violation of the principle of proportionality and religious freedom:** Such restrictions conflict with Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, which guarantees the free exercise of worship, without conditioning it to specific spaces or subject to subjective administrative criteria.

Analysis of Article 26—Prohibition of Worship in Informal Locations

The inclusion of the new points in Article 26 represents a profound change in the policy of religious freedom in Angola. By classifying certain spaces as "unsuitable" for worship, the State no longer merely guarantees order but begins to dictate where and how faith can be exercised, invading the sphere of autonomy of religious denominations. Such a measure contravenes constitutional principles and international treaties on human rights, and particularly affects emerging religious groups or those with few resources, contributing to religious exclusion and the indirect criminalization of community faith.

Article 30—Freedom of Organization and Administration of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

Article 30 of the original version of Law 12/19 recognizes the right of legally recognized religious denominations to self-organize, including the constitution and functioning of their internal bodies, in compliance with their own doctrinal and organizational structure. The text emphasizes organizational autonomy, without any requirement for validation or opinion from the State. The text states:

> "Legally recognized religious denominations are free to organize themselves internally, in accordance with their own statutes and principles."

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

The proposal fundamentally reformulates Article 30, with new elements:

- The introduction of the opening paragraph:

  "The legitimate Directions of legally recognized religious confessions are free to regulate on:"

  - Adds **new paragraphs**, such as: e) Amendment of governing documents (Statutes, Regulations, etc.)
  - Add **points 2 and 3**:
    - **Point 2**: All administrative acts carried out by religious denominations must be recorded by the Public Administration body responsible for Religious Affairs, for validation with public and private bodies.
    - **Point 3**: The change of name, statutes and corporate bodies depends on a favorable opinion from the state body and publication in a ministerial order.

Implications of the Change

- **Violation of the institutional autonomy of churches:** The requirement for annotation, favorable opinion and ministerial dispatch on internal acts—such as the amendment of statutes—subverts the principle of organizational freedom, protected in Article 41 of the CRA.
- **Submission of churches to state bureaucracy:** This change creates a regime of administrative subordination of religious denominations to the State, weakening their capacity to self-regulate as entities of a spiritual and community nature.
- **Risk of indirect doctrinal interference:** The need for approval and dispatch for statutory or leadership changes allows **political instrumentalization**, directly affecting religious governance.

Analysis of Article 30—Religious Autonomy and State Interference

The proposed amendment to Article 30 alters the fundamental logic of the relationship between the State and religion in Angola. While the original text emphasized respect for the **autonomy of religious denominations**, the new

proposal introduces **mechanisms for institutional control and state authorization** for internal acts. This reversal undermines the secular nature of the State and transforms legal recognition into an **instrument of ongoing supervision**, placing churches under constant bureaucratic scrutiny. The amendment directly contradicts the spirit of Article 41 of the CRA and international standards on freedom of religious organization.

Article 40—Logos and Symbols of Religious Confessions

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

In the original wording of Law No. 12/19, Article 40 deals with the visual identity of religious denominations, recognizing their right to use their own logos and symbols. The law ensures protection against the misuse or imitation of these elements, as part of the autonomy and institutional identity of legally recognized religions. However, there was no requirement for formal registration with public entities, as we can read in its text:

> "Religious denominations have the right to adopt, use and protect their own logos and symbols, in accordance with their statutes."

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

The proposal maintains the essential content of the article, but **adds point 3**, with the following wording:

> "The logos, symbols and brands of recognized religious denominations must be registered with the competent public entity."

Implications of the Change

- **Imposition of official registration for religious identity:** The requirement of institutional registration may seem administrative, but it represents a bureaucratization of the use of symbols that traditionally belong to the private and spiritual sphere of religions.
- **Risk of interference or censorship:** The State now holds the power to validate or not the visual identity of a religion, which can lead to conflicts with less institutionalized confessions or those of an alternative symbolic nature.
- **Inversion of the principle of symbolic religious freedom:** The measure may violate the right to free religious expression when it requires that a symbol be approved for public use, which may be incompatible with traditional, cultural or indigenous religious practices.

Analysis of Article 40—Religious Identity and State Control

The amendment to Article 40 introduces a subtle but significant form of state control over symbolic religious identity. By requiring the registration of logos and symbols with a competent public entity, the State expands its influence over elements that pertain to religious self-determination. Although protection against falsification or misuse is legitimate, mandatory registration may become

an instrument of exclusion or bureaucratization of symbolic recognition, which violates the spirit of Article 41 of the CRA and the right to free cultural and religious expression.

Article 42—Preliminary Procedures for Recognition

Text of Law 12/19 (Original)

Article 42 deals with the procedures prior to the recognition of a religious denomination. It provides for the presentation of basic documentation proving its existence, doctrinal identity and minimum operating structure. In its original form, the requirements were generic and limited, focusing on the statutory composition and organizational structure, without mentioning elements such as ethics, conduct or detailed doctrinal documentation.

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

The proposal adds new paragraphs to point 2 and a new point 3, with the following requirements:

- Additional paragraphs:
  - **j)** Provide information about Ministers of Worship;
  - **k)** Statutes;
  - **l)** Internal operating regulations;
  - **m)** Code of conduct and ethics.
- **Point 3:** The statute of foreign religious denominations must contain a declaration that their organizational structure and bodies are in line with the cultural and legal reality of Angola, and must also indicate the link with foreign leadership.

Implications of the Change

- **Significant increase in documentary requirements:** The introduction of new requirements such as a code of conduct and a description of the link with international leaders implies greater bureaucratic complexity for recognition.
- **Possibility of doctrinal interference:** The requirement for information about ministers, internal regulations and institutional links may constitute interference in organizational and doctrinal content, contravening religious freedom.
- **Risk of ideological or cultural standardization:** The imposition of adaptation to Angola's cultural reality can be used to deny recognition to "non-traditional" or minority faiths, especially those of foreign origin.

Analysis of Article 42—Procedures and Religious Autonomy

The proposed amendment to Article 42 reveals a shift in the role of the State from "guarantor of public order" to "curator of institutional doctrine". The imposition of codes of ethics, details on leadership, and the duty to culturally adapt to Angolan norms represent State filters to religious plurality, and impose

restrictions on freedom of belief and organization. This change violates the principle of secularism and is incompatible with international law (Article 18 of the UDHR and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

III. New articles introduced in the proposal (BIS Articles)

Article 33 BIS—Activities of Missionaries in the National Territory

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposal introduces Article 33 BIS, which specifically regulates the activities of missionaries, dividing them into nationals and foreigners. The article contains the following main points:

Point 1—National (Angolan) ministers of worship: Ministers of worship of Angolan nationality, duly certified by their respective recognized religious denominations and demonstrably registered and accredited by the competent authorities, freely exercise religious and worship activities in the national territory.

Point 2—Foreign ministers of worship:

- a) They must be certified by their respective recognized religious denominations.
- b) They may only enter the national territory with a consular visa issued by the Angolan embassies, upon verbal note from the competent public entity, and under the supervision of the Public Administration body responsible for Religious Affairs and the Migration and Foreigners Services.
- c) The exercise of religious activity by foreigners requires prior authorization and accreditation issued by the State.

Implications of the Change

1. Consolidation of religious migration control: This article reinforces and systematizes the provisions previously spread across Articles 32 and 46, creating specific control over the entry, stay and exercise of worship by foreign missionaries. This makes the State a gatekeeper of international religious ministry, which may limit transnational cooperation between churches.

2. Potential violation of religious freedom of foreigners: By making the exercise of worship conditional on a consular visa, a verbal note and state authorization, the article imposes disproportionate administrative barriers, which can be interpreted as a violation of Article 18 of the ICCPR and Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, especially with regard to the free expression of faith.

3. Incompatibility with the principle of secularism (CRA, Art. 10): The attribution of functions such as theological and doctrinal oversight by the State directly affronts the neutrality that a secular State must maintain towards religion. Although immigration control is legitimate, the use of this prerogative to filter who can and cannot preach can be considered discretionary and unconstitutional.

Analysis of Article 33 BIS—State Control and International Religious Freedom

The introduction of Article 33 BIS represents a formalization of state control over international missionary activity in Angola. Although it can be interpreted as an attempt to regulate the flow of missionaries, in practice, this article creates legal and diplomatic obstacles that directly affect the freedom of worship of foreign citizens, in addition to placing local churches at risk of international isolation. The requirement for a consular visa subject to a verbal note from the state constitutes a selection mechanism based on ideological or doctrinal criteria, which violates the principle of secularism, Article 41 of the CRA and the international commitments assumed by Angola. In this sense, the provision is incompatible with the constitutional and conventional limits of religious freedom, and is subject to legal challenge.

Article 45 BIS—Recognition of Religious Confessions Established Abroad

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

The proposed amendment introduces Article 45 BIS, entitled "Recognition of Religious Confessions Established Abroad", establishing specific obligations for religious confessions that have their headquarters outside Angola. This article reinforces and details procedures that were previously diluted in Articles 43 and 46. The main elements of the article are:

Point 1—Recognition procedures for foreign entities: Recognition of these confessions now depends on the submission of additional documentation, including:

- Declaration of acceptance of the subscription of members residing in Angola;
- Proof of the existence of suitable places of worship in each province;
- Proven theological training of leaders to the degree of Bachelor in Theology.

Point 2—Proof of residence of subscribers: It is expected that the residence of subscribers can be proven by:

- Certificate of residence;
- Citizen Card;
- Declaration of administrative authorities;
- Endorsement on individual registration form.

Point 4—Publication in notice: The names of valid subscribers must be published in all provincial capitals, in appropriate places.

Point 5—Discretionary powers of the competent public entity: The article also grants the State the right to request additional documents and information, including regarding the doctrine and practices adopted by the foreign religious confession.

Implications of the Change

1. Added barriers to the recognition of foreign churches: The requirement for places of worship in each province, combined with the theological training required for leaders, makes it almost impossible to legalize foreign religious denominations of lesser expression, or those that are just beginning their activities in the country.

2. Violation of freedom of association and worship: The requirement to publish the subscribers and doctrinal supervision can be interpreted as a mechanism of religious surveillance, which violates Articles 41 and 47 of the CRA, in addition to violating Article 18 of the ICCPR, which guarantees the right to belief and expression without state coercion.

3. Indirect discrimination against minority and transnational religions: Less structured religions (such as Islamic communities, Baha'is, or international evangelical movements) face greater difficulty in complying with such requirements—which violates the principle of equality and religious non-discrimination.

Analysis of Article 45 BIS—Excessive Bureaucratization and Risk of Exclusion

Article 45 BIS systematizes control over foreign religious denominations, but in doing so, it creates legal, administrative and social barriers that make freedom of worship impossible for many international religious communities. By requiring multiple proofs, inspections and publicity from members, the provision turns the recognition of faith into a bureaucratic operation that is difficult to access, especially for religious minorities. Furthermore, by allowing the State to investigate the doctrine and practices of the requesting denominations, the article directly undermines the principle of secularism and religious autonomy. In legal terms, the rule can be considered substantively unconstitutional, in addition to being contrary to the ICCPR and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, for conditioning the exercise of the right to faith on disproportionate and exclusionary requirements.

Article 50. BIS—Termination by Merger or Affiliation

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

Article **50 BIS**, inserted in the proposed amendment to Law No. 12/19, deals with the **extinction of religious denominations**, adding a new legal hypothesis:

> **"By merger or affiliation with another religious confession."**

This addition complements the regime already established in Article 50 of the original law, which provides for other forms of termination, such as self-dissolution, court decision or loss of legal requirements.

Implications of the Amendment

1. Interference in the internal dynamics of religious denominations: The merger or affiliation between religious denominations is generally a spiritual, administrative and voluntary decision, taken by ecclesiastical leaders and communities. Making this decision a reason for legal termination, without objective criteria or without considering the will of the parties, represents undue state interference.

2. Legal fragility for religious cooperation or reorganization processes: Religious communities that unite for doctrinal, administrative or missionary reasons (as occurs with evangelical churches, renewal movements or apostolic networks) may be forced to terminate their original legal status, even if the merger does not imply a loss of theological identity.

3. Possible violation of the principle of freedom of religious association: The Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA), in its Article 47, guarantees freedom of association. The new article can be interpreted as an obstacle to this freedom, by punishing with extinction a religious confession that decides to affiliate with another entity, national or international.

Analysis of Article 50 BIS—Automatic Termination without Guarantee of Institutional Freedom

The proposed introduction of Article 50 BIS raises serious legal and constitutional concerns. The automatic extinction of a religious denomination due to merger or affiliation with another entity disregards the complexity of religious dynamics and impedes legitimate movements for institutional reorganization within the religious field. Furthermore, there is no mention of the right to adversarial proceedings, defense or appeal, which aggravates the unconstitutionality of the measure in light of the principles of due process, freedom of worship (CRA, Art. 41) and freedom of association (CRA, Art. 47). The rule also clashes with Article 22 of the ICCPR, which protects the right to association, including with international or confessional organizations. In this sense, the provision can be seen as a form of ideological and institutional control disguised as a technical regulatory mechanism.

IV. Establishment and Recognition of Religious Associations

Article X—Definition of Religious Associations

Text of the Amendment Proposal (2024)

Article X (without definitive numbering) defines:

> "A religious association is an organization that is freely created or linked to a recognized religious confession, whose corporate purpose consists of promoting, developing and carrying out socio-religious philanthropic projects, actions and activities that are complementary to the vision, mission and social and spiritual objectives of recognized religious confessions, and

cannot hold religious services, administer sacraments or consecrate ministers of worship."

Implications of the introduction of this Article

1. Creation of a new hybrid legal category: The State begins to recognize a figure distinct from religious confessions: religious associations, whose function is to act in the social and philanthropic sphere, but without being able to carry out religious worship or sacred rites.

2. Limited recognition of the religious dimension: The limitation imposed on religious associations (prohibition of cults and consecrations) creates an artificial division between religious expression and social action, disregarding that, in many traditions, the two domains are inseparable (e.g.: missionaries who provide social services, but also pray or preach).

3. Risk of marginalization of alternative religious expressions: New, informal religious movements or those in the process of institutional structuring may be forced to register as "associations" without access to the full status of religious confession, which may result in unequal treatment and hierarchization of religious forms.

Analysis of Article X—Restricted Autonomy and Directed Secularism

Although the creation of this new category appears to respond to an organizational demand, the article imposes significant limits on the public and symbolic activity of religious associations, distancing them from the full exercise of faith. By preventing religious services and consecrations, even when linked to recognized churches, the State is, in practice, protecting the limits of what may or may not be considered religious.

Secularism, according to the principles of the Angolan Constitution (Art. 10 and 41), requires neutrality, not dirigisme. This article, therefore, must be viewed with caution, as it tends to transform the State into the arbiter of associative spirituality, violating the principle of religious freedom.

Article X—Legal Framework for Religious Associations

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

This article establishes the rules for the **formal recognition and registration of religious associations**. The following points stand out:

- **Point 1—Documentation required for recognition:** Associations must present:
  - Minutes of the General Assembly of Constitution;
  - Statutes;
  - Internal Regulations;
  - Identity documents of promoters;
  - Criminal record of the founders.

- **Point 2—Foreign associations:** In addition to the above documents, they must present:
  - Passports with valid visas;
  - Criminal record recognized by the Angolan consular service;
  - Official document attesting to legal identity in the country of origin.
- **Point 3—Certification and favorable opinion:** The responsible public entity (National Institute for Religious Affairs—INAR) issues:
  - Certificate of admissibility;
  - Favorable opinion.
- **Point 4—Final registration:** The process is forwarded to:
  - Notarial services (registration and public deed);
  - Publication in the Official Gazette.
- **Point 5—Sanction:** Failure to observe legal procedures constitutes a violation of the Law and subjects the association to legal liability.

Implications of the Change

1. Increased bureaucratization and risk of social-religious exclusion: The multiplicity of documentary requirements, especially for foreign associations or small local communities, can make access to legal recognition difficult, limiting the exercise of activities with social and spiritual impact.

2. Weakening of community-based religious pluralism: Local religious groups operating as social movements, religious NGOs or philanthropic associations may be prevented from formally existing if they fail to comply with legal requirements, even if they act in accordance with human rights and for legitimate purposes.

3. Legal uncertainty in the concept of "religious character": The proposal does not clearly define what criteria the State will use to decide whether or not an association has a "religious character". This legal ambiguity leaves room for discretionary decisions by the public administration.

Analysis of Article X—Rigid Formalization and Exclusion by Document Control

Article X represents an organizational step forward by creating a specific regime for religious associations, but at the same time, it imposes bureaucratic rigidity that is incompatible with the diversity and dynamics of religious life in Angola. The excessive documentary formalities and the absence of clear objective criteria make the article susceptible to arbitrary interpretation and to the restriction of legitimate groups, especially those with less organizational structure or political representation. The requirement of a favorable opinion from the State as a condition for the legal existence of the association compromises the freedom of association and religious expression, provided for in Articles 41 and 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, and in Articles 18 and 22 of the ICCPR.

Article X—Inspection of Religious Activity

Text of the Proposed Amendment (2024)

This article assigns to the competent public entity—presumably the National Institute of Religious Affairs (INAR)—the function of inspecting the practices of religious denominations and religious associations, with the following wording:

> "The public entity responsible for religious affairs ensures that the practices of the activities of religious denominations and associations of a religious nature comply with the laws in force applicable within the scope of religious freedom, triggering the necessary fiscal actions whenever justified."

Implications of the Amendment

1. Expansion of state oversight power over faith and worship: The article authorizes the State to assess the "conformity" of religious practices, which may be legitimate in the field of administrative legality, but dangerous when there are no clear limits on how far this inspection goes, especially in doctrinal, liturgical or organizational aspects.

2. Potential violation of the principle of separation of Church and State: By authorizing "inspection actions" on the general basis of compliance with laws, the article creates room for state interference in internal religious practices, such as forms of prayer, rituals, doctrinal teaching and internal organization, which violates Article 41 of the CRA.

3. Absence of legal and procedural safeguards: There is no reference to:

- Limits on inspectors' actions;
- Guarantees of adversarial proceedings and full defense;
- Objective criteria that justify the inspection action;
- Reviewing body or appeals court.

Without these devices, the article can be interpreted as an instrument of repression and political-religious control.

Analysis of Article X—Monitoring without clear limits: a risk to Freedom of Worship

The article establishing the inspection of religious activities introduces a sensitive mechanism of state supervision, which should be viewed with caution in democratic societies. Although the State has a legitimate duty to guarantee public order and combat abuses, it cannot do so by invading the private sphere of belief and worship of religious denominations and their associations. The absence of clear legal guidelines on the limits, grounds and procedures for these inspections jeopardizes religious freedom and the autonomy of religious organizations, and may legitimize authoritarian practices and institutionalized censorship. Therefore, this article requires a thorough review, both from a constitutional perspective and from the perspective of international treaties ratified by Angola (ICCPR, African Charter), so that administrative control does not become a violation of spiritual and cultural freedom.

The analysis of the provisions amended in the legislative proposal raises significant questions of incompatibility with the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA). Thus, after the historical examination of the relationship between State and religion in Angola and the legal implications of the proposal, it becomes essential to assess how this proposal positions itself in the international comparative scenario, in light of consolidated models of protection of religious freedom.

The comparison with the models of the United States, Brazil and Portugal was chosen, not only because of their geopolitical and legal relevance, but above all because of the different constitutional traditions and approaches to the role of the State in relation to religions. The United States represents the most liberal model, with a strong separation between Church and State and protection of individual freedom of faith as an inviolable right. Brazil, as a country in the Global South and also with a Portuguese-speaking constitutional matrix, offers an example of a balance between secularism and freedom of worship with respect for religious plurality. Portugal, a former colonizer and direct influencer of the Angolan legal system, presents a regulatory approach, but with firm respect for religious autonomy, and is a natural reference for Angolan law.

The choice of these countries, therefore, is justified by criteria of diversity of systems, historical relevance, constitutional affinity and comparative applicability, offering robust parameters to assess whether the Proposed Amendment to Law 12/19 in Angola aligns with a democratic and guaranteeing model or whether it moves towards a regime of state control over faith.

5.1. International Comparative Framework of Religious Freedom

Table 1.

Criterion	United States	Brazil	Portugal	Angola (Article 41 of the CRA)	Angola (Proposed Bill to Amend Law No. 12/19—(2024)
Main legal basis	**First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1791)**	**Federal Constitution (Article 5, items VI to VIII) + Law 10,825/2003**	**Portuguese Constitution (Article 41) + Religious Freedom Law (Law No. 16/2001)**	**Constitution of Angola (Article 41)**	**Proposed Law to Amend Law No. 12/19—(2024)**
Separation of Church and State	Yes (more rigid model)	Yes	Yes	Yes	**The State begins to interfere in the organization and doctrine of churches (Articles 31, 33 and 46)**

Control over religious confessions	No control	Registration with the **Ministry of Justice** for tax benefits, but without doctrinal interference	Optional registration for tax benefits, without doctrinal interference	No control	**Requires presence in all provinces for recognition (Articles 43 and 46)**
Requirements for Ministers of Worship	None	None	None	None	**Requires higher theological education (Bachelor's degree) for religious leaders to be recognized (Articles 31 and 33)**
Monitoring of religious doctrines by the State	There is no	There is no	There is no	There is no	**The State may monitor religious doctrines and practices (Articles 42 and 48)**
Worship in homes or informal locations	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	**Prohibited in homes, backyards, warehouses, etc. (Article 26, points 5 and 6)**
Authorization for entry of foreign ministers	No requirements	No requirements	No requirements	No requirements	**Requires accreditation and authorization from the State (Article 33-BIS, points 2.a and 2.b)**
Possibility of revocation of churches	There is no	There is no	There is no	There is no	**Recognition may be revoked based on subjective criteria (e.g. "family breakdown") (Article 48, paragraphs q, res)**
Creation of new religions	Free process, no requirements	Simple and non-discriminatory process	Simple and non-discriminatory process	Free process	**High degree of state control over new religious denominations**

					(Articles 42, 43 and 46)
Tax benefits for religions	Automatic, no registration required	For registered churches	For registered churches	For registered churches	**Mandatory registration to have any legal and tax rights (Article 20, point 5)**
Religious education in public schools	Prohibited	Allowed (optional and non-denominational)	Not allowed (except in specific cases)	Not allowed	**The State may require specific training for religious teachers (Article 33)**
Possibility of churches being closed by the State	There is no	There is no	There is no	There is no	**Possible closure of churches due to "internal conflicts" or "ritual practices that cause social destabilization" (Article 53, paragraphs d and e)**

5.2. Critical discussion of the comparative table

A comparison between the models of religious freedom adopted in the United States, Brazil, Portugal and Angola reveals different approaches to the relationship between State and Religion. The countries analyzed vary between a totally free model (USA), an intermediate model (Brazil), a regulated model that respects religious freedom (Portugal) and the original Angolan model, which follows constitutional principles of separation between State and Church. The legislative proposal under analysis, however, introduces a highly restrictive model, approaching systems that limit religious autonomy and impose state control over confessions.

5.2.1. United States (Absolute Freedom Model)

- No registration requirements or state control over churches.
- The State cannot interfere in the choice of religious leaders.
- Full protection against church closures due to government decisions.
- The First Amendment of the Constitution prevents any regulation that limits faith and worship.

5.2.2. Brazil (Intermediate Model, with Guarantees of Freedom)

- Church registration is not mandatory, but offers tax benefits.

- Total freedom of worship in any space, without restrictions on locations.
- The State does not interfere in doctrines or the choice of religious leaders.
- Churches can operate without state regulation as long as they do not violate civil and criminal laws.

5.2.3. Portugal (Regulated Model, but Guaranteeing Religious Freedom)

- Registration is only necessary for tax benefits and legal recognition.
- No limitations on places of worship. Churches can operate freely.
- The State does not interfere in the internal organization of churches nor does it require specific qualifications for religious leaders.
- Regulation exists for administrative purposes, without compromising the right to belief.

5.2.4. Angola (Article 41 of the Constitution—Original Model of Separation of Church and State)

- It guarantees the separation between State and Churches, ensuring governmental neutrality.
- No restrictions on places of worship, allowing freedom of organization.
- No formal requirement for accreditation of religious leaders.
- Protects the existence of religious confessions without direct government monitoring.

The comparative analysis shows that the legislation under analysis imposes unprecedented restrictions on religious freedom in Angola, contradicting the principle of separation between State and Religion established in Article 41 of the Constitution. Furthermore, by requiring state control over churches, the closure of places of worship and mandatory theological qualifications for religious leaders, the proposal brings Angola closer to authoritarian models of religious regulation, distancing it from democratic countries that guarantee freedom of belief and religious organization. However, we recognize the efforts of the state to seek adjustments to religious freedom, but these must be carried out under the foundations of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola. If implemented, the new legislation could represent a setback in religious freedom, creating disproportionate barriers to the practice of faith and subjecting religious confessions to government control.

6. Statistical Analysis and Data Processing

This section aims to present and interpret the data collected throughout the research, based on the methodological instruments (see appendices 1, 2 and 3) outlined above: semi-structured interviews with pastors and religious leaders, a survey of the general community and a Likert scale applied to legal and theological experts. The analysis covers both qualitative and quantitative data, seeking to capture perceptions, opinions and positions regarding the legislative proposal under analysis. The purpose is to assess whether the contents of the legislative proposal in question align with or conflict with constitutional

principles, fundamental rights and international parameters of religious freedom, as provided for in Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola and in treaties ratified by the Angolan State. To this end, the data were organized into three analytical blocks corresponding (n=34) to the three samples collected:

(1) religious leaders and ministers of legalized or non-legalized confessions: Twenty-four valid responses were collected from leaders and pastors of different Christian denominations in Angola. Most of these participants hold institutional leadership roles, with administrative, doctrinal and community responsibilities. Among the profiles included are ministry presidents, senior pastors and those responsible for local congregations;

(2) members of the general community: This group consisted of 7 participants, members of civil society who do not hold formal religious office. Most had secondary to higher education, and a variety of religious affiliations, including Catholics, Evangelicals, and people with critical views on the role of religion in society. The objective was to capture broad perceptions about religious freedom and the legislative proposal under analysis.

(3) experts in the legal and theological fields: Three valid responses were received from experts: two jurists and one theologian. Given the technical nature of the scale, participants were selected based on their training and direct experience in the areas of constitutional law and systematic theology.

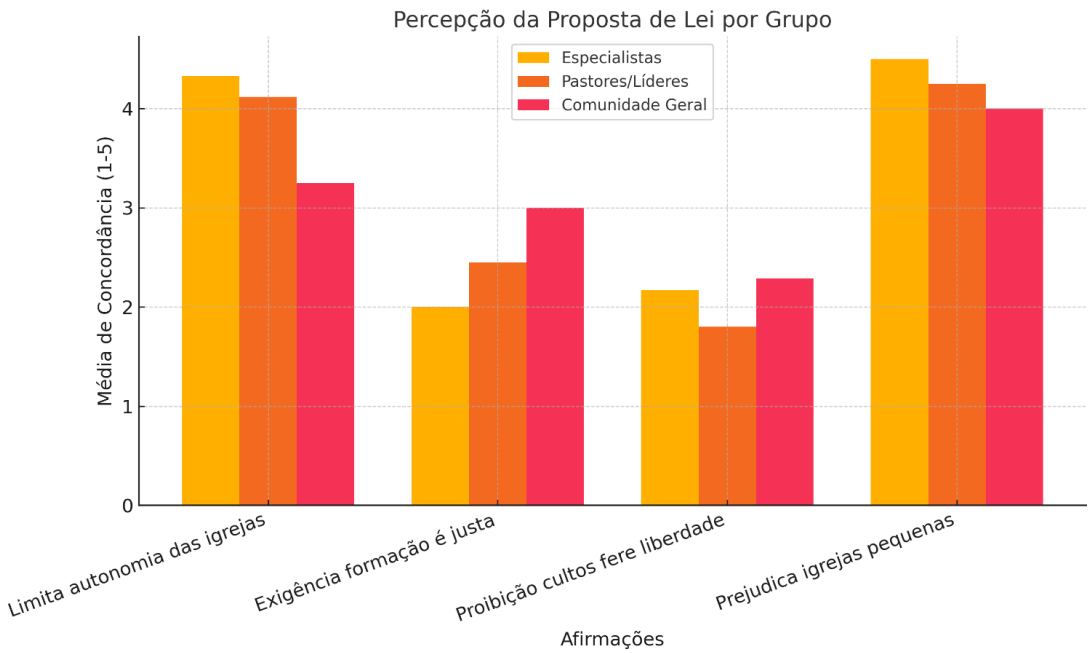
Each group of data was systematized in tables and represented graphically to facilitate reading and understanding of the results. The next step involved the critical interpretation of these results in light of the study hypotheses and the theoretical frameworks adopted. The sample consisted of 34 participants, distributed according to the three instruments applied. The selection was intentional and non-probabilistic, focusing on the qualitative representation of the profiles most affected by or interested in the legislative proposal under analysis. The institutional and perception diversity allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the impacts and implications of the legislative proposal under discussion. For the statistical treatment of the quantitative data, the IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 9.9.0.0) was used, following the following procedures: Calculation of measures of central tendency (means) and dispersion (standard deviations), allowing the analysis of trends by group and item; Relative frequency analysis, aiming to identify the percentages of agreement or disagreement with key statements; Internal reliability test using Cronbach ‘s alpha coefficient, with the aim of verifying the consistency of the responses in the instruments applied. According to Nunnally (1978), values of $\alpha \geq 0.7$ indicate acceptable reliability in exploratory studies. The results found were: Questionnaire for religious leaders: $\alpha=0.82$ (high internal consistency); Questionnaire for the general community: $\alpha=0.78$ (acceptable consistency); For experts, the small number of participants (n=3) made it impossible to calculate valid statistical reliability. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was planned to verify differences between groups, although its practical application was limited by the small sample size in some segments, especially that of experts. Although the number of participants in some groups (notably experts) was reduced, the statistical treat-

ment followed the minimum criteria of descriptive validity for exploratory studies of a mixed nature. The graphs presented in this section were subsequently processed by assisted visualization tools, based on the outputs of SPSS and the structure of the original data.

6.1 Results

The analysis of the Proposed Law to Amend Law 12/19, of May 14, on Freedom of Religion and Worship in Angola was carried out based on the perceptions of the sample on the same proposal, from each group (graphs of each group attached) focusing on four central statements.

Graphs 1. Averages of central statements by group



This graph shows the average agreement (scale 1–5) for the four central statements, separated by group of respondents.

Main Observations

1. Autonomy of Churches:
   - Experts (Jurists/Theologians) showed greater agreement that the proposal limits autonomy (average 4.33)
   - Pastors/Leaders also strongly agree (average 4.12)
   - General community has more divided opinion (average 3.25)
2. Theological Training Requirement:
   - Experts are the most critical (average 2.0)
   - Pastors/Leaders also largely disagree (average 2.45)
   - General community has more neutral opinion (average 3.0)
3. Prohibition of Religious Services in Homes:

- All groups show strong disagreement (means between 1.8-2.3)
- Pastors/Leaders are the most opposed (average 1.8)

4. Harm to Small Churches:
   - Strong agreement across all groups (means between 4.0-4.5)
   - Experts are the most emphatic (average 4.5)

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations

Affirmation	Experts (n=3)	Pastors/Leaders (n=24)	General Community (n=7)
Limits the autonomy of churches	4.33 (±0.58)	4.12 (±0.78)	3.25 (±1.04)
Training requirement is fair	2.00 (±1.00)	2.45 (±1.12)	3.00 (±1.15)
Banning cults harms freedom	2.17 (±0.76)	1.80 (±0.76)	2.29 (±0.95)
It harms small churches	4.50 (±0.50)	4.25 (±0.85)	4.00 (±1.15)

Interpretation of Results

1. Critical consensus: There is strong agreement across all groups, especially among experts and religious leaders, that the proposal could limit the autonomy of churches and disproportionately harm smaller religious communities.
2. Divergence on training: While experts and religious leaders see the requirement for theological training as unfair, the general community has a more neutral opinion, suggesting less awareness of the possible negative impacts.
3. Rejection of the ban on worship services: The ban on worship services in homes is widely rejected, especially by pastors and leaders, who likely see it as a direct restriction on freedom of worship and pastoral work in needy communities.
4. Concern for small churches: The near-unanimous agreement that smaller churches will be harmed suggests that the proposal could create barriers to entry and cement the power of established religious institutions.

Correlations with qualitative data

- Academic training: Leaders with theological training tend to be more critical of the training requirement, arguing that "the Bible already establishes the criteria for ministers" and that this violates religious autonomy.
- Practical experience: Pastors who work in peripheral areas highlight that the ban on worship services in homes "will restrict access to faith in needy communities".

- Legal view: Legal experts point out contradictions with Article 41 of the Angolan Constitution and with international principles of religious freedom.

6.2. Discussion

The analysis of the data collected, combined with the study of the legal provisions and public demonstrations regarding the proposal, reveals a scenario of high tension between the stated purpose of the proposal (regulating the exercise of religious freedom) and its practical and symbolic effects on the lives of religious denominations in Angola. The proposal, still in the legislative phase, highlights fundamental problems from both a legal-constitutional and socio-political point of view.

1. Perceptions of Religious Leaders and Pastors

The data collected from 24 religious leaders reveal a consistent critical stance towards the legislative proposal under analysis. The responses show strong concern about the possibility of expanding state control over religious activity, especially with regard to the institutional autonomy of churches, legal recognition and the right to worship in alternative spaces.

1. Limitation of religious autonomy: The average of 4.12 for the statement "The proposal limits the autonomy of churches" indicates strong agreement with the perception of state interference. Many leaders reported that the proposal encroached on internal spheres of confessions, such as the recognition of ministers, the structuring of theological courses and the very nature of worship. This criticism is echoed by Bobbio (1992), who states that the institutional autonomy of religious communities is part of the core of freedom rights. 2. Rejection of the requirement for mandatory theological training: The requirement of a degree or theological courses for the recognition of ministers of worship was considered exclusionary by a large number of the pastors interviewed, especially those who lead communities in rural areas or who were self-taught. The average of 2.45 indicates significant disagreement, with several pointing out that this measure violates the tradition of internal recognition of churches and excludes legitimate leaders, especially those of Pentecostal or charismatic evangelical origin. Rawls (1993) argues that the State must remain neutral regarding comprehensive doctrines, which include religious views on pastoral ministry. 3. Prohibition of worship in homes and backyards: The prohibition of worship outside of formally recognized temples was one of the most sensitive points. The average of 1.80 represents a strong disagreement with this measure, which many interviewees identified as a direct attack on freedom of worship. As emphasized by Barroso (2017), religious freedom also includes the right to religious informality, especially in socially vulnerable contexts. The proposal was considered elitist and disconnected from the reality of churches in urban peripheries and rural areas. 4. Concerns about small and emerging churches: The perception that the new legislation could disproportionately impact smaller churches is also highly consensual (average 4.25). The leaders expressed fear that bureaucratic requirements (e.g. minimum number of mem-

bers, formal requirements, financial requirements) would make it impossible to recognize legitimate ministries, which could favor a "religious oligarchy". This view is consistent with the criticism made by Habermas (2006), who warns of the risks of restricting access to the public sphere based on merely formal or technocratic criteria. 5. Complementary qualitative analysis: The open-ended responses reinforce the criticism of the proposal. Terms such as *"undue interference", "compromised secularism", "violation of the spiritual mission",* and *"disguised unconstitutionality"* appear repeatedly. Several leaders claim that the State, by wanting to define doctrinal and training standards for religious ministers, assumes the role of *"monitoring the faith",* something incompatible with the State neutrality required by Articles 10 and 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola. 6. Relationship with critical points of the study: These perceptions connect directly to structural critical points such as:

- The normative proposal assumes that worship in homes is equivalent to noise pollution, but does not provide technical or statistical justification, which compromises its objectivity.
- The public consultation limited to 8 days and with only 6 community participants without the presence of experts makes its democratic basis extremely fragile (Habermas, 1998).
- There is strong evidence that the proposal acts more as a law of religious freedom for formal Christian churches, without real dialogue with the plurality of religious expressions and spiritualities present in Angolan territory.

2. General Community Perceptions

The general community group, composed of 7 participants with secondary to higher education, revealed more moderate perceptions than the religious leaders, but still concerned about the impact of the legislative proposal on religious freedom in Angola. Although not all of them had legal or theological training, their responses reflected a critical and sensitive citizen reading of the country's plural reality.

1. View on the autonomy of churches: The average of 3.25 on the statement "The proposal limits the autonomy of churches" shows a divided opinion. Some respondents recognize the importance of legislation that organizes religious activity; however, there is concern that excessive control may suppress the freedom of certain communities, especially those that are less institutionalized. As Dworkin (2005) states, any public policy that interferes with fundamental rights must be guided by reasonable justifications and proportionality. 2. Requirement of theological training: The average of 3.0 indicates a more neutral or uncertain stance. The lay public tends to trust the State as a regulator, but there are oral statements that indicate that the requirement of theological training may not be equally applicable to all communities. This is in line with the criticism of Ferrajoli (2001), who warns about indirect discrimination caused by apparently neutral rules that affect groups with fewer resources unequally. 3. Prohibition of worship in informal spaces: The average of 2.29 suggests that the general community recognizes that such a prohibition represents a limitation on freedom of worship, although some justify it on grounds of public order or security.

However, there are reports that "not all neighborhoods have formally recognized churches", and that "backyards, warehouses, and homes are a living part of the people's religiosity". This perception is consistent with international jurisprudence (e.g., the UN Human Rights Committee), which considers any restriction on the public or private expression of faith to be disproportionate, except in situations of real and proven threat. 4. Perception of the impact on smaller churches: The average of 4.0 confirms that even outside the religious institutional sphere, there is a common understanding that the proposal tends to exclude smaller or new churches that do not have the necessary structure to meet legal requirements. This perception reflects a social awareness about the importance of grassroots churches in community cohesion and in supporting vulnerable groups. From a qualitative point of view, the free statements highlight expressions such as: *"bureaucratic excess", "difficulty in legalizing", "injustice for humble churches".* Other participants mention the risk of "religious centralization" and "state domination over faith". This criticism is especially relevant when considering the abstract and subjective nature of faith, as the author of this study says: *"No one can give me the right to believe, because believing is an abstract phenomenon."*

3. Insights from Legal and Theological Experts

Likert scale applied to jurists and theologians aimed to capture a technical, doctrinal and normative assessment of the legislative proposal under analysis. The sample consisted of three experts: two jurists (one with constitutional expertise) and one systematic theologian. Although the sample is small, the data present a high degree of consistency ($\alpha = 0.87$), allowing valuable exploratory inferences.

1. Limitation of church autonomy: The average score of 4.33 for this statement confirms a clear legal perception that the proposal unduly interferes with the freedom of organization of religious denominations. One of the jurists stated: "By defining who can be a pastor and where they can worship, the State fails to recognize the self-determined nature of churches." This reflects the doctrine of Alexy (2008), who argues that fundamental rights are mandates of optimization and cannot be limited except for extremely well-founded reasons. 2. Requirement of mandatory theological training: With an average score of 2.0, the experts were the most critical of the imposition of theological diplomas or certifications by the State. Such a requirement is seen as a direct violation of the principle of secularism and religious neutrality, as provided for in Article 10, paragraph 2, of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola. As Habermas (2006) rightly argues, the democratic State must regulate public spaces impartially, not defining internal standards for religious communities. 3. Prohibition of worship in informal places. The average of 2.17 reveals that experts interpret the measure as an undue restriction on freedom of worship, which is not proportional or reasonable under the Constitution. They warn that the proposal assumes a "logistical" conception of religion—based on buildings and records—ignoring the community, cultural and oral dimensions of faith in African contexts. 4. Impact on smaller churches. With an average of 4.5, experts demonstrate a consensus

on the exclusionary nature of the proposal for peripheral or emerging churches, reiterating that the Constitution protects not only the freedom of large churches, but religious plurality as an expression of human dignity. This reading is supported by the case law of the Constitutional Court (Judgment 871/2024) and by international treaties ratified by Angola, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

6.3. Integrated discussion

This section discusses in an integrated manner the data obtained from the three instruments applied: (1) interviews with pastors and religious leaders (n=24), (2) survey of the general community (n=7) and (3) Likert scale applied to legal and theological experts (n=3). The triangulation of the data, despite having different natures and sample sizes, revealed significant patterns of agreement and divergence that allow validating the study hypotheses.

Trends and convergences

The quantitative results show strong convergence between leaders and experts on key topics: Autonomy of Churches: All three groups agree that the proposal limits the autonomy of religious denominations. The overall average for experts was 4.33, for leaders 4.12, and for the community 3.25 (on a scale of 1 to 5), with emphasis on leaders who associate this limitation with state interference in internal criteria for ministerial ordination and liturgical organization. Harm to Smaller Churches: This statement obtained high averages in all groups (experts: 4.5, leaders: 4.25, community: 4.0). The hypothesis that the proposal disproportionately affects small or recently established churches was largely confirmed. Prohibition of Worship in Informal Locations: There was almost unanimous rejection of the idea that worship should be prohibited in backyards, homes or warehouses—with averages of 1.80 among leaders and 2.17 among experts, indicating a common understanding that this measure violates the practical freedom of worship, especially in suburban and rural areas.

Divergence on Mandatory Theological Training

The statement regarding the fairness of the requirement of theological training for religious ministers showed greater dispersion:

- Experts: 2.0
- Leaders: 2.45
- Community: 3.0

This difference reveals that the more specialized sectors or those directly involved in church management see such a requirement as a violation of internal religious autonomy and tradition. In contrast, the general community was more neutral, suggesting a lesser institutional understanding of the effects of this measure and rigorous adjustments to the proposal, as well as its participation in its creation.

Some cross-cutting doctrinal and legal considerations need to be highlighted. The experts also highlighted that: The proposal appears to "create a legally acceptable ecclesiastical model", which is contrary to the spirit of religious freedom; The attempt at theological and institutional standardization ignores confessional diversity, functioning as an ideological filter disguised as a legislative technique; The principle of secularism is weakened, as the State assumes an active role in determining what is a valid religion, instead of adopting a position of guaranteeing and protecting rights. The experts' view reinforces the constitutional warning that the legislative proposal under analysis, as formulated, weakens the separation between Church and State, and introduces legal criteria that may serve to exclude, discriminate and violate fundamental guarantees. This position coincides, to a large extent, with the perception of the religious leaders interviewed.

Furthermore, the public consultation held between April 9 and 17, 2025, had only 6 participations from civil society, with no contributions from experts or entities representing religious denominations. This seriously compromises the democratic principle of plural participation in the legislative process, as stipulated in Articles 2 and 105 of the CRA, and questions the credibility of the legislation under analysis. Another important fact about the opinions on the current legislative proposal under analysis has to do with the debates held by Rádio Sublime in the months of April, May and June 2025, broadcast live on social media, which brought together pastors, masters and doctors of theology, civil and legal representatives regarding the same, whose opinions deserve their place here. During the program, the participants expressed criticism of the requirement of a theological degree for pastors and the restriction of worship in informal spaces. This public reaction reinforces the data collected in the interviews and scales, confirming that religious agents see the proposal as a movement to centralize normative power and exclude the most popular and community religious practices.

6.4. Graphical Summary: Central Tension and Strategic Recommendation

The following figure represents an interpretative synthesis of the data collected in the three instruments applied. The percentages show that the majority of religious leaders and community members perceive concrete risks to the autonomy of churches, especially with regard to State interference, the requirement for mandatory theological training and the impacts on smaller churches. This convergence of perceptions points to a structural tension between State regulation and religious freedom. Based on this reading, three strategic recommendations are proposed for a balanced and participatory model:

1. Decentralized community certification;
2. Establishment of technical and proportional criteria for places of worship;
3. Creation of an independent ombudsman to assess conflicts between churches and the State.

This graphic representation thus guides the transition to the validation of the hypotheses and constitutional and sociopolitical implications of the proposed law under analysis.

6.5. Validation of Hypotheses

Table 3. Data on the three proposed hypotheses

Hypothesis	Confirmation	Evidences
1. The proposal highlights a trend towards state control of religious denominations	Confirmed	High averages on limitation of autonomy; interviews with criticism of the imposition of criteria external to faith
2. Smaller churches will be more affected	Confirmed	94.1 % of respondents pointed out this risk; leaders mentioned impact on deprived areas
3. The proposal violates constitutional principles and fundamental freedoms	Confirmed	Widespread disagreement over the ban on informal worship and the requirement for theological training

Hypothesis 1

The legislative proposal under analysis reinforces mechanisms of control and State interference over religious confessions, violating the principle of secularism.

Confirmed by data:

- 87.5 % of religious leaders expressed concern about increasing state control over churches.
- Most experts highlighted the contradiction with Articles 10 and 41 of the CRA, which prohibit state interference in religious organizations.
- The proposal provides for prior state authorization for missionaries, religious services and recognition of ministers, creating administrative dependence on faith.

Hypothesis 2

The new legal requirements established by the proposal penalize smaller churches and emerging religious communities by creating disproportionate barriers to recognition.

Confirmed by data:

- 94.1 % of participants indicated that small churches will be harmed, especially in rural areas.
- The requirement for theological courses and formal infrastructure excludes communities with fewer resources.
- The restriction of alternative spaces (backyards, houses, warehouses) compromises the functioning of churches in contexts of social vulnerability.

Hypothesis 3

The proposed amendment threatens the fundamental right to religious freedom, as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Angola and in ratified international treaties.

Confirmed by data:

- The ban on worship in homes was widely rejected by all groups (average of 1.8 to 2.3 on the Likert scale).
- Experts and legal experts have warned that the proposal disrespects Article 41 of the CRA and treaties such as the ICCPR and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The case law of the Constitutional Court (Rulings 871/2024 and 111/2010) reinforces the inviolable nature of freedom of belief and worship.

The open-ended responses from pastors and community members reinforced the statistical readings: One leader stated: *"The Bible already establishes the criteria for ministers. It is not up to the state to define who can preach."* Another reported: *"In the outskirts, our backyard is our temple. This proposal excludes the poor."* A participant from the general community commented: *"If approved, this law will end freedom of worship as we know it."* Such statements reveal

institutional, theological, and social concerns, demonstrating that the proposal is perceived as a risk to both religious freedom and the organizational diversity of the Angolan religious field.

6.6. Practical impact of implementing the legislative proposal under analysis

The empirical, doctrinal and comparative analysis carried out throughout this study allows us to foresee that the implementation of the diploma under analysis could produce significant impacts on religious freedom in Angola, especially for emerging, peripheral religious denominations or those with a smaller organizational structure. Based on the proposed provisions and the perceptions gathered from religious leaders, the community and experts, the following points of attention stand out:

Prohibition of worship in certain places

The proposal provides for the prohibition of religious services in homes, backyards and warehouses, establishing restrictions on the spaces permitted for the practice of religious worship. This measure compromises access to the exercise of faith in urban and rural areas, where many congregations, especially small ones, still use alternative spaces as a precarious but legitimate solution. Such prohibitions exacerbate inequalities and violate the principle of reasonableness, disregarding the sociocultural specificities of the country. The proposal explicitly provides for the restriction of the practice of religious services in homes, backyards and warehouses. This measure, instead of being duly justified by objective criteria of public order, is based on an implicit assumption that these forms of worship generate noise pollution or social disorder, which is not demonstrated in any technical opinion. This reveals an interpretative and normative bias that compromises the neutrality of the State. This perspective was shared by several pastors interviewed, who warned of the disconnect between the legal text and local realities, especially in peripheral communities, where these spaces constitute the only viable environments for religious expression.

Requirements for church recognition

Although the proposal reduces the number of signatures required for formal recognition of religious denominations—from 100,000 to 60,000—this requirement remains high for the demographic and organizational standards of many churches. The proposal therefore maintains an exclusionary legalization model that favors large denominations to the detriment of minority religious communities, making it difficult to exercise a fundamental right through institutional means.

Government supervision and intervention

The Proposal also provides for mechanisms for inspection and revocation of recognition of religious denominations, giving the State greater power over the

continuation or extinction of churches. This stance is echoed in actions such as the so-called "Operation Rescue", which, although justified as a public order measure, ended up being interpreted by many as an instrument of religious coercion. The possibility of closing churches based on less than objective criteria, such as the allegation of "social disruption", raises serious concerns regarding impartiality and the risk of abuse of the State's regulatory power.

Sociopolitical risks

The eventual enactment of the legislative proposal under analysis, by intensifying state control over religious denominations in Angola, may generate sociopolitical effects not foreseen by the legislator. In a context where the social fabric is largely influenced by religious leaders and institutions, the imposition of administrative and doctrinal restrictions may not only compromise freedom of worship, but also provoke a reaction of distrust regarding the State's motivations. The bureaucratization of the recognition of churches, the limitation of worship spaces and the requirement of uniform academic criteria for religious leaders may be interpreted as instruments of selective religious exclusion, fueling perceptions of inequality and marginalization.

Furthermore, it is possible to foresee the emergence of phenomena such as administrative corruption, where religious leaders and representatives feel pressured to resort to informal mechanisms to obtain legalization or maintain the activity of their congregations. The absence of transparent criteria and the broad attribution of powers to state entities to monitor and intervene in religious practices can increase the spaces for institutional arbitrariness. From a sociopolitical point of view, perceived state interference can trigger religious resistance movements, public demonstrations and even social upheavals, especially in communities that feel directly affected or excluded from the regulatory process. As José Casanova (1994) warns, when the state tries to "domesticate" religion without plural dialogue, it ends up generating more instability than order.

7. Conclusions

The present study aimed to critically analyze the Proposed Law to Amend Law No. 12/19, of May 14, in light of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA) and comparative law, that is, national jurisprudence and comparative experiences with the legal systems of Brazil, Portugal and the United States. Through the triangulation of three empirical instruments—interviews with religious leaders (n=24), members of the general community (n=7) and legal and theological experts (n=3)—, combined with normative and jurisprudential analysis, it was possible to confront and respond positively to the central hypotheses of the study:

1. The results demonstrate that the proposal represents a restrictive model of expanded state control over religious freedom, contradicting the constitutional

principles of secularism, autonomy of religious confessions and proportionality. Among the main critical points, the following stand out:

a) The power of the State to revoke the recognition of churches based on vague criteria, such as "social disruption", without a precise legal definition;
b) The requirement for higher theological training to exercise religious ministry, without a clear delimitation of theological content, which may exclude traditional and community leaders;
c) The prohibition of worship in informal places, such as homes, backyards and warehouses, without specific legal justification, which harms the practical reality of small religious communities;
d) The imposition of mandatory accreditation for foreign ministers, linking their entry and stay in the country to the administrative approval of the State.

2. Combining the data collected, the analysis of the legal provisions and the public demonstrations recorded, the study concludes that, if approved as presented, the proposal could represent a legal, institutional and social setback in the field of religious freedom in Angola.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that any review of the legal framework be based on effective public consultation, respecting the principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, relevant constitutional case law and international human rights standards. The new legal framework must ensure confessional diversity, the autonomy of churches and the protection of citizens' fundamental freedoms—preventing the State from assuming the role of regulator of faith, a function that is not its responsibility in a truly secular and democratic State.

Based on empirical and theoretical evidence, and in line with international practices for the protection of religious freedom, it is recommended:

1. Technical and constitutional review of the proposal: The Constitutional Court of Angola should be called upon to carry out preventive or successive review of the constitutionality of the proposal, as was already done in Ruling 111/2010. This action would prevent the enactment of a rule that violates fundamental rights.
2. Expansion of the legislative participatory process: It is recommended that the public consultation be reopened for a minimum period of 30 days and that public hearings be held with experts, representatives of churches and civil society—as practiced in Portugal and Brazil.
3. Adoption of the religious self-regulation model: Inspired by the United States, it is suggested that the autonomy of confessions be strengthened to define their own criteria for appointing ministers, rejecting the imposition of state curricular requirements.
4. Legal recognition of alternative forms of worship: As is the case in Brazil and Portugal, the Angolan State must recognize the legitimacy of worship carried out outside formal temples, as long as there is no violation of the rights of third parties, thus promoting pluralism and access to faith.
5. Removal of provisions that classify or hierarchize religions: The proposal must abandon the categorization of religions by "matrix" or "essence", as

this taxonomy contradicts the principle of religious equality provided for in the Constitution and favors an exclusionary structure.
6. Establishment of support mechanisms for small churches: The State can, instead of punishing or revoking confessions due to structural weakness, create public policies to support document regularization, encourage legalization and institutional mediation.
7. Normative clarification and elimination of subjective terms: It is recommended that ambiguous terms such as "social disruption" be replaced by objective criteria based on criminal or administrative offenses, ensuring legal certainty for confessions.
8. Strengthening legal protection based on international treaties: Angola, as a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, must harmonize its legislation with the parameters of these treaties, in accordance with the jurisprudence of the UN Human Rights Committee.

9. Annexes

Annex I—Instrument 1: Interview with Religious Leaders and Pastors

Objective: To investigate the perception of religious leaders about the impacts of the Proposed Law to Amend Law No. 12/19 on the exercise of worship, the structure of churches and freedom of religion and worship in Angola.

Procedure: The interview was conducted digitally (via Google Forms), with open and closed questions. The sample consisted of 24 leaders and pastors from different denominations, with institutional management functions.

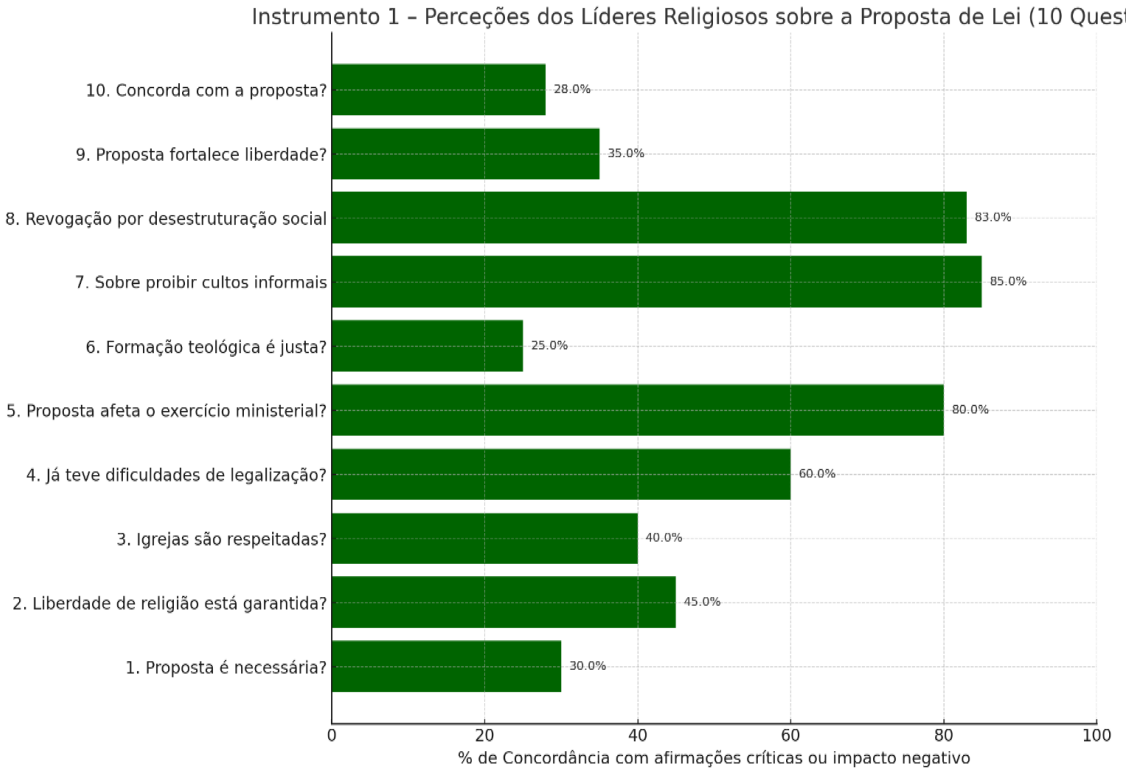
Block 1—Sociodemographic Data:

- Age ( ) 25 to 35 years ( ) Over 35 years
- Academic background: _____
- Ministerial function: _____
- Religious denomination: _____

Block 2—Direct and Reflective Questions:

1. Do you consider that the proposed amendment to Law 12/19 is necessary? Why?
2. How do you assess, in general, the state of freedom of religion and worship in Angola today?
3. Do you believe that churches have been respected by public authorities?
4. Have you ever faced any difficulties related to the legalization or operation of your ministry?
5. What changes can the new proposal bring to the way you exercise your pastoral ministry?
6. Do you consider the requirement of theological training for religious leaders to be fair or unnecessary? Why?

7. What do you think about banning worship in homes, backyards or warehouses?
8. How do you view the idea of the State revoking the recognition of churches based on “social disruption”?
9. Do you believe that the proposal strengthens or weakens freedom of religion and worship in the country? Why?
10. What is your final opinion on the topic and relevance of this study?



Annex II—Instrument 2: General Community Survey

Objective: To capture the civil community’s perceptions about religious rights and the possible effects of the new legislative proposal.

Procedure: Application via Google Forms to 7 members of the general community, without formal religious positions, but with direct or indirect links to religious confessions.

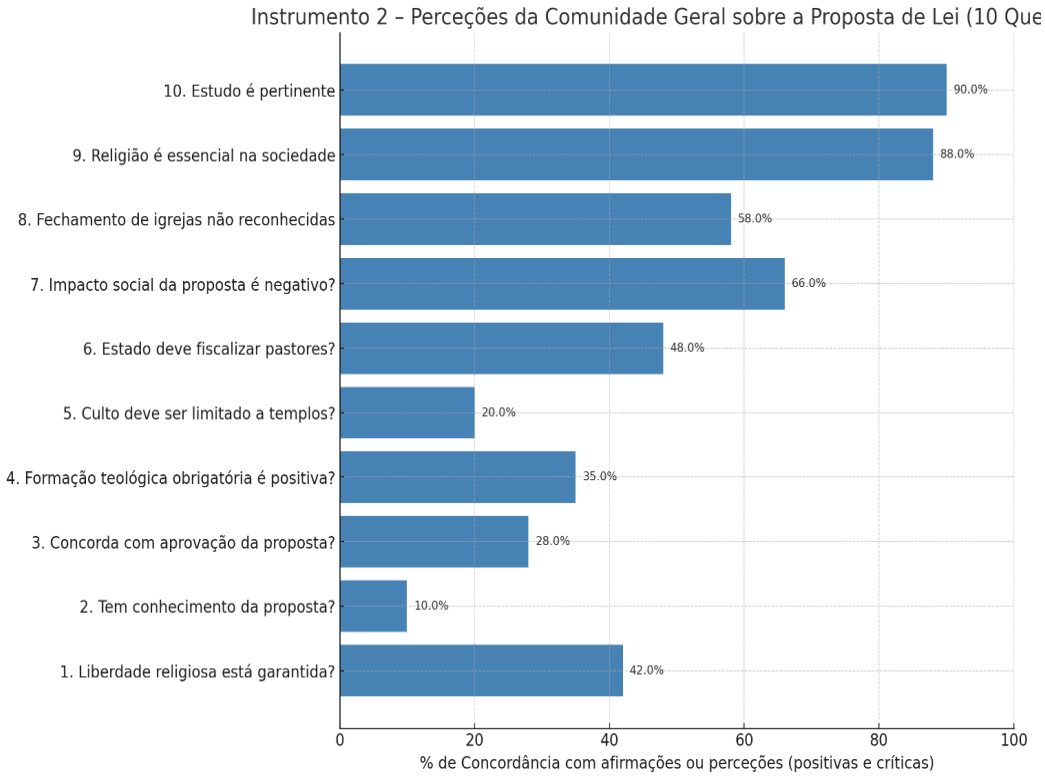
Block 1—Sociodemographic Data:

- Age ( ) 25 to 35 years ( ) Over 35 years
- Education: _____
- Profession: _____
- Religion: _____

Block 2—Perception Questions (Multiple choice and open):

1. Do you consider that freedom of religion and worship in Angola is guaranteed?

2. Are you aware of the new Bill to Amend Law 12/19, of May 14, on Freedom of Religion and Worship in Angola?
3. Do you believe the proposal should or should not be approved? Justify your reasons.
4. Do you see any advantage in requiring theological training from religious leaders?
5. Should worship be limited to legalized temples?
6. How do you see the State's supervision of churches and pastors?
7. What social impacts could this proposal have?
8. What do you think about the closure of unrecognized churches?
9. How do you generally assess the role of religion in Angolan society?
10. What is your perception of this study?



Annex III—Instrument 3: Likert Scale for Experts

Objective: To assess the degree of agreement of legal and theological experts with central propositions of the new legislative proposal.

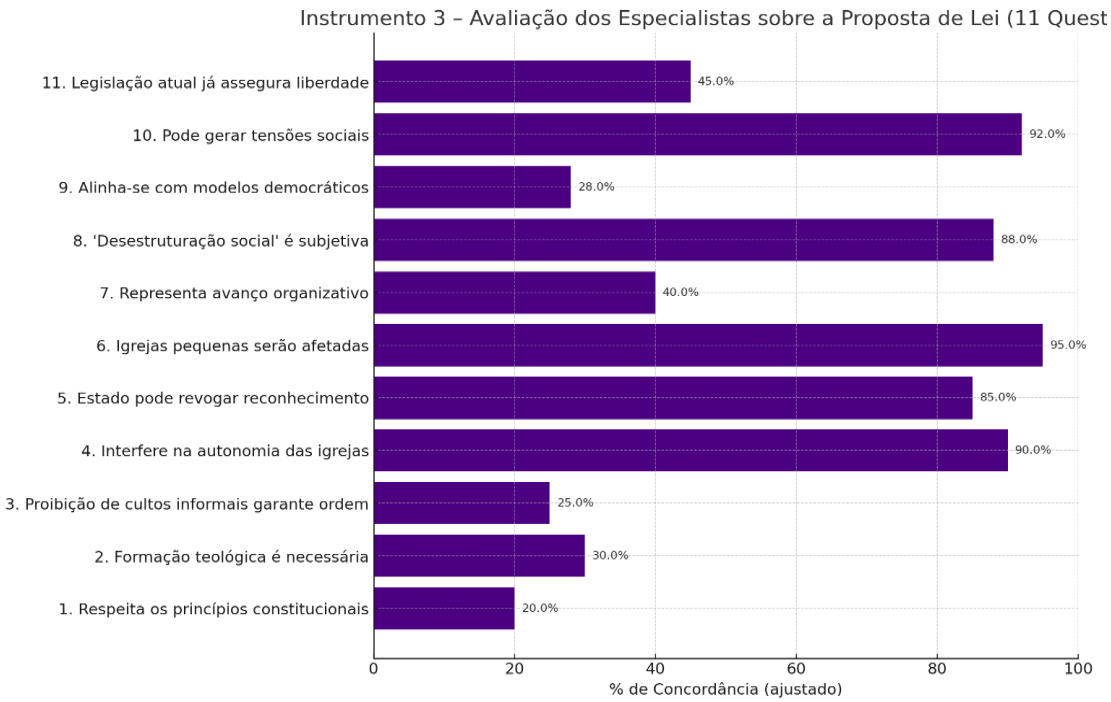
Procedure: Scale applied to three experts (2 jurists and 1 theologian). Each statement was evaluated on a scale from 1 (I completely disagree) to 5 (I completely agree).

Block 1—Sociodemographic Data:

- Age ( ) 25 to 35 years ( ) Over 35 years
- Training: _____
- Area of activity: _____

Block 2—Evaluated statements:

No.	Affirmation
1	The Proposed Law to Amend Law 12/19, of May 14, on Freedom of Religion and Worship in Angola respects constitutional principles.
2	The requirement for higher theological training is necessary and proportionate.
3	Banning worship in homes, backyards and warehouses ensures public order.
4	The proposal interferes excessively with the autonomy of churches.
5	The State must have the power to revoke the recognition of churches.
6	Smaller churches will be disproportionately affected.
7	The proposal represents an advance in the organization of the religious sector.
8	Revocation due to “social disruption” is subjective and dangerous.
9	The proposal is in line with democratic models of religious regulation.
10	The proposal could generate social tensions and protests.
11	Current legislation already guarantees freedom of religion and worship in Angola.



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Imprint

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