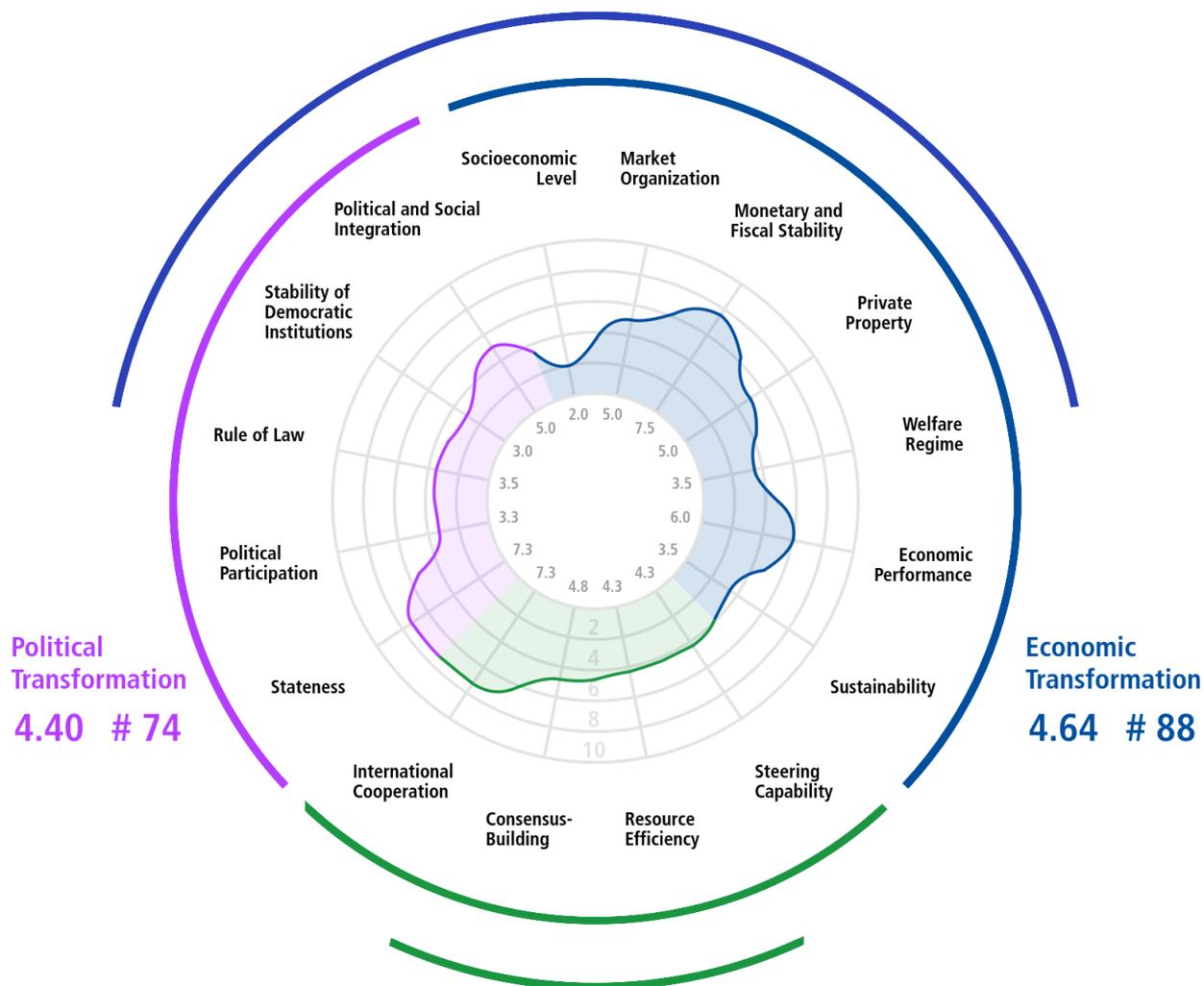


Togo

Status Index

4.52 # 88

on 1-10 scale out of 137



Governance Index

4.77 # 64

on 1-10 scale out of 137

This report is part of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2026. It covers the period from February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2025. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries. More on the BTI at <https://www.bti-project.org>.

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Contact

Bertelsmann Stiftung
Carl-Bertelsmann-Strasse 256
33111 Gütersloh
Germany

Sabine Donner

Phone +49 5241 81 81501
sabine.donner@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Hauke Hartmann

Phone +49 5241 81 81389
hauke.hartmann@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Sebastian Plate

Phone +49 5241 81 81263
sebastian.plate@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Sabine Steinkamp

Phone +49 5241 81 81507
sabine.steinkamp@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Key Indicators

Population	M	9.5	HDI	0.571	GDP p.c., PPP \$	3239
Pop. growth ¹	% p.a.	2.2	HDI rank of 193	161	Gini Index	37.9
Life expectancy	years	62.7	UN Education Index	0.559	Poverty ³	% 58.8
Urban population	%	45.1	Gender inequality ²	0.564	Aid per capita \$	66.2

Sources (as of December 2025): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | UNDP, Human Development Report 2025. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$3.65 a day at 2017 international prices.

Executive Summary

Togo features a multifaceted political, economic and social landscape. Politically, the state exhibits authoritarian inclinations. A notable development was the constitutional amendment of 2024, which was implemented to strengthen the authority of President Faure Gnassingbè. This amendment involved revising the powers granted to the prime minister, a position tailored to the president's needs and not subject to any term limits. The most recent parliamentary elections resulted in a decisive victory for the ruling party, the Union for the Republic (UNIR), once again granting it a constitutional majority. At the same time, fundamental liberties such as the freedoms of assembly and of the press are subject to considerable constraints. Critical journalists and opposition leaders face harassment, while the courts are subject to political control and lack independence. The security situation in the northern region is particularly concerning, as Islamist groups have carried out attacks, further destabilizing the area. The government's prioritization of maintaining its grip on power takes precedence over the implementation of comprehensive reforms, contributing to a continued decline in public trust in democratic processes.

There is significant economic inequality and a weak economic base. Despite the country's recent economic growth, marked by a downward trend, Togo is ranked 163rd on the Human Development Index. Inadequate access to essential services such as energy, water, health care and education persists, particularly in rural areas. The informal sector dominates employment, accounting for more than 90% of jobs but without sustainable value creation. Togo's public debt has reached a critical level, totaling nearly 70% of GDP, and the burden of debt servicing places significant strain on public finances. Although foreign direct investment has increased, its impact remains limited due to structural obstacles. Because the country is part of the CFA franc zone, the monetary system provides stability but limits economic flexibility.

From a social perspective, the situation of the population is challenging. Women and girls continue to experience significant disadvantages, particularly regarding educational opportunities and property rights. Child marriage and gender-based violence are prevalent. Poverty and inadequate social services impose a substantial burden on the population, particularly in rural areas where

access to essential resources such as clean drinking water and medical care is often limited or nonexistent. The allocation of financial resources for education has been declining, and students' reading skills remain disconcertingly inadequate. These challenges are further compounded by environmental issues, including climate change, coastal erosion and bushfires, which have not been broadly reflected in countervailing environmental regulations.

Despite international support and development plans such as Road Map 2025, progress remains limited. Political tensions, inadequate institutional frameworks and a reliance on external funding have impeded implementation of these measures, diminishing their potential impact.

Togo faces significant challenges, including the need to address terrorist threats in the north, the substantial inequalities between urban and rural areas, and ongoing instability within the public finances. Dealing with these challenges will require strategic investments in infrastructure, education and skilled labor, as well as the promotion of enterprises that support local economic development. Ensuring the security of energy and raw material supplies will also be crucial in order to sustain growth and development. Ongoing political polarization and repression threaten the nation's long-term stability, underscoring the need for comprehensive national reconciliation. Despite these political challenges, Togo could benefit from international support in security and development policy. At the same time, civil society must be actively fostered as a catalyst for reform to ensure sustainable progress.

History and Characteristics of Transformation

Togo achieved independence from France on April 27, 1960. The first democratic presidential elections in 1961 resulted in the election of Sylvanus Olympio as president. However, his tenure was marked by a significant political event: his assassination in 1963 by a group of Togolese veterans of the French colonial army, led by Etienne Gnassingbè (later called Eyadéma). This event marked the first violent coup in the history of independent sub-Saharan Africa. Following another coup d'état in January 1967, Gnassingbè Eyadéma became president of Togo in April 1967. He established a one-party government and ruled as Togo's authoritarian head of state for 38 years.

In July 1991, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the apparent success of democratization efforts in several African countries, including neighboring Benin, influenced the organization of a Sovereign National Conference. The assembly opted for a semi-presidential system and elected an interim prime minister. However, four months later, President Eyadéma ordered the army to attack the interim government, reestablishing his dictatorial power. The political persecution of opponents over the next two years triggered an unprecedented wave of migration, with about 350,000 refugees primarily fleeing to neighboring Benin and Ghana. In 1993, the EU and other major international and bilateral donors officially suspended development cooperation with Togo due to gross human rights abuses. This substantial reduction in international aid had severe effects on the country's economy.

When Gnassingbè Eyadéma died in 2005 after nearly four decades of autocratic rule, the military declared Faure Gnassingbè, one of his sons, to be the new head of state. Widespread international protests pressured the new president to call presidential elections in April 2005. Despite significant irregularities that marred the process, Faure Gnassingbè was sworn in as president on May 4, 2005. In response to this perceived manipulation of the public will, most of the Togolese population engaged in protests, but these were met with a brutal military response, resulting in the deaths of approximately 700 individuals and the displacement of more than 40,000 citizens to neighboring countries. Following these events, considerable international pressure forced the government to negotiate with the opposition, which culminated in the establishment of the Global Political Accord in August 2006.

The first free parliamentary elections took place in October 2007. The dominant political party at the time, the Rally of the Togolese People (RPT) – which later became the Union for the Republic (UNIR) in 2012 – won by a large margin. However, the integrity of the electoral process has been questioned. Contested presidential elections followed in March 2010, April 2015 and February 2020, reinforcing Faure Gnassingbè's incumbency as he secured his second, third and fourth five-year terms with the backing of most voters.

Prior to the 2020 presidential election, parliament enacted a constitutional amendment that limited presidents to two terms. However, this change did not have retroactive effect, and in principle guaranteed that the president could be re-elected until 2030. In the lead-up to the 2025 presidential elections, parliament, controlled by the UNIR party, enacted a new constitution in early April 2024, initiating the transition to the Fifth Republic. Once implemented, the new constitution will make the president a purely representative figure, while the prime minister, elected by the National Assembly without term limits, will assume all current presidential powers. It is noteworthy that Faure Gnassingbè is expected to seek election to this post and is likely to be chosen by a majority of parliament members.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Transformation Status

I. Political Transformation

1 | Stateness

In the aftermath of the initial jihadist assaults on state security forces and the civilian population in the northern regions of the nation at the end of 2021, there has been a marked escalation in cross-border terrorist activities by Islamist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State group (IS). This escalation has occurred amid ongoing political upheavals, particularly in neighboring Burkina Faso. In 2023 alone, 31 people were killed, 29 injured, and several others kidnapped in Togo. This trend persisted in 2024. The deadliest attacks took place in October 2024 in the Savanes region, where 20 civilians and nine soldiers, including two Turkish military advisers, were killed in the villages of Fanworgou and Malgbangou. Looting and livestock theft by armed individuals have also become common. The prevailing insecurity has enabled the proliferation of organized criminal activities such as human trafficking and the illicit trade of weapons and narcotics, which are either facilitated by the deteriorating security environment or used by violent groups to generate revenue. The government's negligence in addressing the northern border regions has contributed to swelling the ongoing opposition to state security forces, hindering the collection of intelligence on terrorist activities.

Recognition has grown that the terrorist threat cannot be adequately countered through military activities alone as part of Opération Koundjaoré. Thus, local committees associated with the Comité interministériel de prévention et de lutte contre l'extrémisme violent (CIPLEV) were created. Unfortunately, the program suffered from poor governance and severe corruption, as a recent evaluation report from the World Bank (2024) stated. Additionally, the Emergency Program to Enhance Resilience in the Savanes Region (Programme d'urgence de renforcement de la résilience dans la région des Savanes, PURS), launched in 2022 to improve living conditions in the northern provinces, has to date achieved only insufficient results. While the program facilitated the resettlement of more than 12,000 individuals from high-risk regions, approximately 5,000 have sought refuge in neighboring countries such as Benin. At the same time, the country is hosting about 50,000 refugees from Burkina Faso.

Question
Score

Monopoly on the
use of force

7



1

The ethnolinguistic composition of Togo includes about 40 distinct ethnic groups, with the Kabiye in the north and the Ewe in the south among the largest. Some members of these groups have specialized in specific areas of politics, business and society. Notably, people from the north have relatively high levels of representation in the military and public service sectors. This suggests a discernible connection between the regional origin of the Eyadéma family and its influence in these domains. Conflicts arise when ethnic groups feel marginalized, for example regarding access to land or employment. The Peul ethnic group, comprising semi-nomadic herders who migrate with their livestock to available grazing grounds depending on the season and show minimal regard for national borders, is the least integrated group in this region. They are often regarded by the local population as overbearing and uncivilized. In the context of Islamist insurgencies in the northern regions, they are often perceived as collaborators or even members of these violent groups.

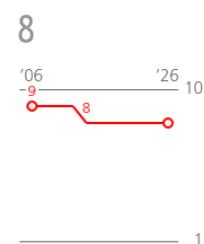
In a survey conducted by Afrobarometer in 2023, 85% of respondents indicated a stronger or exclusive affiliation to the nation than to their ethnic group. Therefore, most Togolese individuals seem to feel a strong sense of national affiliation.

In the constitution, access to and the rights of citizenship are granted to all people equally. In practice, there are some shortcomings: While foreign women become national citizens when married to a Togolese man, the reverse is not true. Notably, more than half of the Togolese population occasionally or regularly encounters discrimination, with economic status emerging as a pivotal factor in determining inclusion. In light of these findings, the government has outlined its plans to promote heightened patriotism among the country's youth in its 2024 annual plan, with a particular emphasis on respect for state authorities. A series of training events was initiated in the northern regions to disseminate this message.

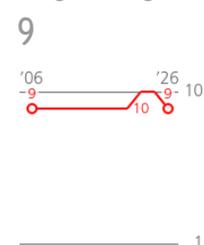
The state of Togo is defined by constitutional secularism. Its legal framework prohibits religious discrimination. Religious communities may register if they meet the required criteria. However, since 2013, there has been a delay in processing applications from evangelical churches seeking official recognition. The national calendar recognizes both Christian and Islamic holidays. The government has not yet published data from the most recent 2022 census regarding the population's religious affiliation. According to the U.S. government, 42.3% of the population identified as Christian, 36.9% as adherents of traditional religions and 14% as Muslim. Inter-religious conflict is virtually nonexistent in the country.

Typically, religious communities maintain a neutral stance on the actions of political actors. Historically, prominent figures within the nation's Catholic Church have voiced strong criticism of political processes. A leading example is the late Archbishop Philippe Kpodzro, who, in addition to serving as a prominent religious figure, established the human rights organization *Dynamique Monsignore Kpodzro*, now known as *Dynamics for the Majority of the People (Dynamique pour la majorité du peuple, DMP)*. This organization has been a vocal critic of political developments,

State identity



No interference of religious dogmas



particularly those involving the ruling party. In recent times, church events with political content have been canceled by church leadership after démarches by the government, unless written permission from the state administration was presented.

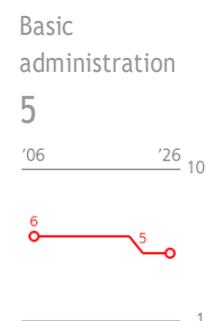
The lack of essential services in sectors such as education, health care, water supply and sanitation is especially severe in rural areas and among people living below the poverty line. The most recent representative survey by Afrobarometer (2024) reports that 99% of people in impoverished groups and 82% of the rural population are concerned about their limited access to health care and the insufficient supply of clean drinking water. World Bank data show that 71.0% of the population had basic access to a water source, and 19.4% had access to a safely managed water source. Additionally, 19.2% of the population had basic access to sanitation and 5.8% had access to safely managed sanitation. Access to electricity was available to 57.2% of the population. The rate of school-age children not attending school is more than 10%.

The government has set ambitious targets in these areas that are comparable to those of previous years. However, progress appears negligible. According to the UNDP's HDR 2024, Togo ranked 163rd out of 193 countries with an index value of 0.547, representing a slight increase from the previous year.

Notably, the Savanes region, which borders Burkina Faso, shows an even more pronounced disparity, with an index value 15% below the national average and 25% below the level of the coastal region around the capital, Lomé. The government has expressed its intention to address staff shortages, with plans to hire 14,000 new employees in the education and health sectors by 2025.

However, the decentralized administration lacks the resources needed to meet its responsibilities. According to WAEMU estimates, 20% of the national budget should be allocated to municipal work; in Togo, this figure is only 5%. The mobilization of local financial resources is hindered by centralization and inefficient tax collection, with tax revenues often barely covering collection costs. Access to justice is also severely limited by distance from the capital or urban centers and often requires bribing public officials.

The development of transportation and trade infrastructure is centered on the Abidjan–Lagos and Lomé–Ouagadougou axes, in addition to the port of Lomé. However, recent official statements indicate that less than 20% of non-asphalted side roads have been rehabilitated in recent years. Concurrently, the budget item for 2025 has undergone a 20% reduction. Internet and mobile phone coverage is concentrated in urban centers and long-distance transport axes, and rural areas continue to experience limited connectivity.



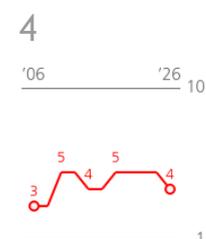
2 | Political Participation

In general, voting in legislative, regional and communal elections is universal, equal and secret. Members of the National Assembly elect the president and prime minister. Voters must register and obtain a voter card, which provides them with the right to vote in a designated voting office. Votes are counted in public and are displayed in the voting office. Nevertheless, there have been repeated complaints about local discrepancies; for example, critics have charged that the results from individual polling stations are manipulated when they are passed on to the central recording office, which is difficult to prove. Systematic discrimination against the opposition during the election campaign does not allow for fair elections.

In March 2024, the Togolese National Assembly – in which the opposition was not represented – voted by a substantial margin (one rejection, one abstention) to approve a new constitution that marked the transition to the Fifth Republic. From now on, the president, whose role will be purely ceremonial, will no longer be elected directly by the people, but instead by the National Assembly and a yet-to-be-determined Senate for a four-year term. The former presidential powers will be transferred to a prime minister, who will also be elected by the National Assembly and the Senate for a six-year term with no limit on the number of terms served. It is clear that President Faure Gnassingbè will be the sole candidate for the prime minister position, allowing him to remain in power indefinitely. The opposition has described the change to the constitution as a constitutional coup, as it was not preceded by consultation with other political actors or a referendum. Numerous organizations from civil society and the Catholic Church have also voiced opposition to the changes, but these efforts have thus far been unsuccessful.

Parliamentary elections, which had been postponed several times, were held in April 2024. These elections resulted in a substantial victory for UNIR, the political party associated with the president. The president and his supporters now have the ability to implement all political decisions, as they hold 108 out of 113 seats in the National Assembly. A significant segment of the opposition, including the Dynamics for the Majority of the People (DMP) party, participated in the electoral process. However, the opposition also highlighted the challenges faced by their officials and members. The state of emergency for the Savanes region, which has been in force since 2022 and was extended until 2025, was expanded to cover the entire national territory for the duration of the elections. As a result, political gatherings were banned shortly before the elections, and independent observers from abroad were not authorized to monitor the process. Election observers from the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) reported witnessing a “good atmosphere.” Conversely, observers from the AU raised concerns about the termination of the mandate of the autonomous electoral commission in spring 2023, arguing that it occurred without a legal basis. In addition, several opposition members were taken into custody. A French journalist

Free and fair elections



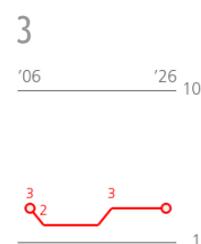
was forced to leave the country after being arrested and physically assaulted by security forces. As a result, all accreditations of foreign reporters were revoked. Despite a de facto news blackout, irregularities were reported at the international level.

The first regional elections, initially scheduled for 2023, were held concurrently. The 179 elected regional councils, tasked with electing one-third of the members of the Senate along with the local councils and the president in 2025, were established. Governed by a regional governor appointed by the national government, these councils will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the five primary regions. The ruling party, UNIR, secured the majority of mandates with 137 councilors.

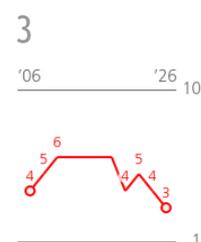
The president's position is strengthened by several factors, including unwavering support from his party, a parliament lacking substantial opposition, dependable civil servants and the military. Members of parliament from the president's party are often rewarded with public offices and positions within the party itself. Additionally, supporters of the ruling party receive preference when applying for civil service positions. This nepotism fosters clientelistic relationships and mutual dependencies, perpetuating the dominance of the prevailing elites. However, this dynamic also reduces the likelihood of sanctions for violations of laws and regulations. The regular appointment of new military leaders is intended to ensure their loyalty and prevent them from becoming a threat to the president. The most recent constitutional amendment further expands the president's powers, supporting the continuity of his family's dynasty, which has ruled for nearly 60 years. The opposition, made up of nearly 30 parties, is characterized by weakness and fragmentation. It relies on the resources of elderly leaders, some of whom are in conflict with one another, and offers minimal alternatives to the prevailing government and the well-organized ruling UNIR party.

The 2024 constitution, in its annex, grants citizens the right to freedom of association and assembly, as well as the right to peaceful demonstrations, provided these actions do not violate national security interests, disrupt public order or disturb "social harmony." Furthermore, the right to strike and to form employee representative bodies is recognized for workers and employees. Nevertheless, the government has repeatedly forbidden rallies and assemblies from being held. For instance, opposition demonstrations against the new constitution in spring 2024 were prohibited, despite a request to the contrary by the African Human Rights Commission. Notably, all open-air gatherings in the capital have been banned since 2022. The opposition has been unable to organize press conferences, and security forces have prevented demonstrators from entering rally sites. Furthermore, protests against the renewed postponement of the 2024 parliamentary elections were not permitted. In instances of violence against opposition members, such as the attack on participants of the Democratic Convention of African Peoples (Convention Démocratique des Peuples Africains, CDPA) by violent criminals, the police did not intervene. In April, nine

Effective power to govern



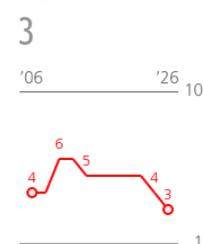
Association / assembly rights



members of the opposition DMP party were arbitrarily arrested for “disturbing the public order” and subsequently released without further legal action. A teachers’ union, established in 2021, has not yet been officially registered. In 2022, when several of its members declared a strike, more than 50 of them were dismissed from their positions in the teaching profession. The unions’ capacity to organize and assert themselves is significantly constrained by the preeminence of the informal sector, which accounts for over 90% of employment and typically offers uncertain and unstable working conditions.

The new constitution of 2024 also guarantees freedom of opinion and freedom of the press. However, the boundaries of these rights are not clearly defined, especially regarding the “honor” of others and the privacy of their personal lives. In practice, exercising these rights is burdened by significant restrictions and obstacles. Despite the abundance of media outlets, including newspapers, radio and television stations and numerous online publications, only a limited number of these have substantial reach. These include state-run media outlets that serve as official government mouthpieces. Critical newspapers such as *Liberté* and *L’Alternative* have faced intermittent bans and harassment by security forces. Notably, the editors of *L’Alternative* were convicted on charges of propagating false information and subsequently left the country before their scheduled imprisonment. In the period leading up to the constitutional amendments and the parliamentary elections, journalists were arrested and faced charges for alleged offenses including “insulting the head of state.” At the beginning of 2024, it was revealed that state security agencies were using the Israeli-made spy software Pegasus to surveil journalists’ mobile devices. These actions have produced a pervasive climate of intimidation among media professionals, resulting in self-censorship and a reluctance to report facts or opinions that may be considered disagreeable to the government. In the most recent Reporters Without Borders ranking of press freedom (2024), Togo experienced a sharp decline to 113th place out of 180 countries.

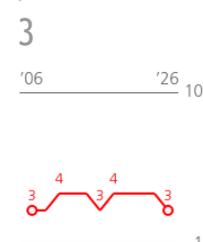
Freedom of expression



3 | Rule of Law

The current constitution was adopted by parliament in 2024, without consultation of the opposition or civil society, although the previous constitution had specified a referendum as the process for such changes. The new document marks the beginning of the Fifth Republic and the transition from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government. The president of the republic will essentially have representative duties. The president of the Council of Ministers, or prime minister, who must also be the leader of the largest parliamentary group or a governing coalition, will hold all the powers previously exercised by the president. Notably, this figure’s term will be extended to six years with no term limits. Ongoing political tensions surrounding parliamentary elections may intensify if the survival of the ruling Eyadéma clan – which has maintained power for 60 years through a combination of clientelism,

Separation of powers



violence, ethnic favoritism, unfair elections and sham constitutional amendments – depends on their outcome. Furthermore, two-thirds of the members of the Constitutional Court will be selected by entities aligned with the incumbent president, further consolidating the ruling party’s hold on power. This arrangement effectively undermines the separation of powers.

The judiciary is not independent. Like the highest courts, the decentralized judiciary is subject to political decisions and the influence of local decision-makers. This is a particular concern for low-income individuals, who often lack the financial resources to bribe judges and face additional obstacles such as lengthy legal proceedings and unfavorable rulings. In many cases, the courts serve as a significant barrier preventing private enterprises from achieving their commercial objectives. The government has acknowledged these concerns and initiated a comprehensive reorganization of the judiciary in 2021. This initiative is meant to ensure the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, enhancing its operational capacity, and establishing adequate appeal mechanisms. However, the implementation of these reforms has faced significant challenges, including personnel and financial constraints. Nevertheless, the newly appointed minister of justice has announced that these reforms would be imminently implemented.

Due to constraints on press freedom and freedom of expression, reports on the abuse of office are scarce. Media outlets that document corruption involving senior officials are often subject to bans, and journalists are pressured to stop reporting such cases. Although incidents of police brutality against civilians are documented, disciplinary action or criminal prosecution for perpetrators is rare. The mistreatment of inmates in overcrowded prisons is also pervasive, though it seldom comes to light. In January 2025, the government established an online platform to provide citizens with a channel to report abuses of power by security forces. However, the reporting threshold is high. To use this service, individuals must have an online account with the Ministry of the Interior and submit identification documents and evidence of the abuse.

In addition to the substantial restrictions on freedom of assembly, speech and the press mentioned above (see “Association / assembly rights” and “Freedom of expression”) discrimination against women, LGBTQ+ people and other minorities is common. However, notable progress with regard to gender equality has been made over the last 30 years. Togo has advanced significantly in the 2024 global gender gap rankings, attaining the 77th position out of 146 countries and occupying a leading position in West Africa. Significant challenges persist, particularly regarding access to education and the ongoing struggle to eradicate gender-based violence, especially within families. Homosexual acts continue to be criminalized, as demonstrated by the imprisonment of a male influencer who was frequently seen on social media wearing women’s clothing. Public opinion is also predominantly opposed to homosexual and queer individuals, with Afrobarometer data indicating that almost 90% of the population holds negative views toward them.



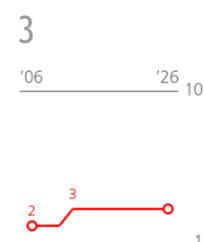
4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

The Togolese government is effectively a facade democracy fundamentally predicated on patronage relationships between the ruling Gnassingbè clan and its adherents at various levels. The 2024 constitution introduced several new elements and modifications, but has not changed the core balance of power. The constitutional amendments, however, have been interpreted as undermining the potential for constraining the president's term of office by transferring his powers to a prime minister, a role initially likely to be assumed by President Gnassingbè himself. The parliament, which is predominantly made up of the president's supporters, seldom takes the initiative in creating new legal regulations and instead often approves the government's proposals. The judiciary also consists of the president's political allies, ensuring the continuity of his administration's policies. The minutes of plenary and committee meetings are not made public, so do not provide insight into the quality of debates. As a result, citizens often cannot comprehend the origins of proposed legislation because there is little consultation with the population, civil society or opposition parties. The Court of Audit, responsible for overseeing the government's budgetary policy, recently released its annual reports for 2016. The observation reports for subsequent years have uniformly confirmed the government's adherence to budgetary guidelines and fiscal discipline. However, there is a conspicuous lack of a discernible and efficient system of checks and balances.

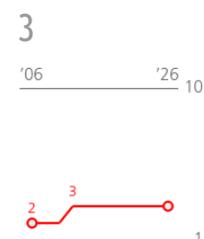
Democratic institutions such as the separation of the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government; regular elections; and government auditing are in place, with a legal basis defining their respective roles and mandates. However, in practice, these democratic principles are often undermined. The executive branch, especially the president, wields significant influence over the other branches of government due to their dependence on him. Elections are frequently manipulated, opposition groups face obstacles, and the freedom of the media and civil society organizations is severely restricted. Informal power structures, marked by the distribution of advantages and intimidation, sustain the government's stability. Democratic institutions are primarily used to create an outward appearance of legitimacy and the rule of law, without enabling genuine participation or power-sharing, resulting in a so-called facade democracy characterized by authoritarian practices.

The government has repeatedly asserted that democracy in Togo is progressing satisfactorily in response to demands from regional and international partners. However, this assertion appears to be more a gesture of compliance than a genuine commitment to democratic reform.

Performance of democratic institutions



Commitment to democratic institutions



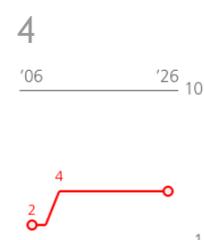
5 | Political and Social Integration

At present, there are 28 active political parties in Togo. Many more exist only in name. Most of these parties are closely tied to their founders, who also provide most of the funding for their activities. State funds are allocated to parties only if they successfully participate in elections, and contributions from registered members are minimal. Only a few parties have well-equipped offices or qualified staff. During elections, these parties often form coalitions with others, though these alliances frequently dissolve after the campaigns end. Most parties have a written manifesto outlining their general political ambitions. However, there is a lack of organizational statutes or administrative regulations, including on the issue of financial management. Additionally, training programs for activists are rare, except for those provided by the UNIR party during election periods. As a result, other parties struggle to mount an effective challenge to the dominant ruling party, UNIR. This party receives financial and other support from dignitaries connected to the presidential family and is deeply intertwined with state institutions.

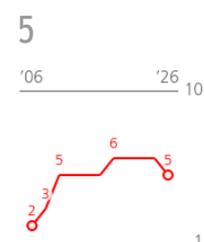
The ruling UNIR party and its predecessor, the RPT, have woven the country into a dense network of patronage relationships. This network exerts strong social control in rural and urban areas alike, often allowing other interests to be pursued only within narrow limits set by the regime. Although there is a large number of civil society organizations, few have any influence on political decisions outside their regionally or sectorally defined areas. Trade unions represent only a small proportion of workers in the formal economy and the public service. The dominant informal sector, which accounts for more than 90% of the workforce, largely has no voice to represent its interests. There is one partial exception to this rule: The wealthy market women known in Togo as “Nana Benz,” particularly those in the Grand Marché de Lomé, have gained status and economic power through the lucrative trade in imported Dutch fabrics (“wax hollandais”), and are still able to influence political decisions in their favor.

Prominent European and African politicians exert direct influence on the president and his entourage. For example, Tony Blair’s foundation assists with the government’s strategic planning. Carlos Lopes and Dominique Strauss-Kahn support the president in evaluating the performance of ministers. Former RFI journalist Alain Foka, a Cameroonian, is considered to be particularly influential. He has settled in Togo with his pan-African organization MANSSAH, and promotes the vision of an Africa free from Western dominance and European concepts of parliamentary democracy. The drafting of the new constitution, which allows the future president of the Council of Ministers to serve additional terms, is said to be due in part to his significant role.

Party system



Interest groups



In the most recent Afrobarometer surveys (2024), 68% of Togolese citizens expressed a preference for democracy over other forms of government. However, this preference has decreased by nine percentage points over the past decade. The survey results also indicate that only 29% of the population is satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Togo itself. The data show a decline in the proportion of individuals who believe that parliamentarians prioritize the interests of citizens, with only 10% expressing confidence in this regard. A notable shift appears when examining satisfaction with local representatives, as 19% of respondents recognized these politicians' commitment to the needs of the community. Furthermore, 64% of respondents expressed a preference for increased military involvement in politics. The 2024 parliamentary elections saw a voter turnout rate of 61% – a significant decline from previous years following the implementation of electoral reforms.

Approval of democracy

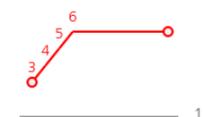
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Inadequate access to social security systems, particularly in rural areas, necessitates the formation of social capital as a survival strategy. This phenomenon is exemplified by the prevalence of informal savings and credit associations, which provide members, predominantly women, with access to essential resources during times of financial exigency, such as when members are ill, enrolling in school or making small investments. Of course, the price for this is compliance with the unwritten rules of the community, which often perpetuate male dominance or existing hierarchies. Additionally, existing patronage relationships extend into political and economic domains. Governments and international partners, particularly in the north, are increasingly recognizing the role of social capital as the adhesive that binds local communities.

Social capital

6



II. Economic Transformation

6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

The HDI 2024 ranks Togo at 163rd place out of 192 nations, with a low score of 0.547, representing a slight decline from the previous year's score of 0.545. Regional differences in progress are evident, with rural areas, especially the Savanes region, showing lower levels of development compared to the capital region of Lomé. When the aggregate HDI score is adjusted for inequalities, it drops by 40% to 0.345. A notable disparity in HDI scores exists between female and male populations, with the former displaying a substantially lower score.

Question
Score

Socioeconomic barriers

2



According to World Bank data (2024), 58.8% of individuals in rural areas live in poverty, compared to 26.5% in urban areas. It is noteworthy that data for the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was not collected in Togo between 2018 and 2024. The Gini coefficient, which measures income distribution, has improved to

37.9. The country's score on the Gender Inequality Index is 0.578 according to the UNDP, denoting a high level of gender inequality. Significant disparities persist in the area of wealth distribution, with the wealthiest 10% of the population holding 61% of the wealth, while the bottom half holds only 4.4%. A large proportion of farmers engage in subsistence agriculture, operating outside the formal market economy. The majority of the economically active population, which represents 55% of the country as a whole, is engaged in informal employment in industry, crafts and services. This segment of the workforce – which excludes those in agricultural activities – is subject to precarious working conditions.

Economic indicators		2021	2022	2023	2024
GDP	\$ M	8342.2	8169.5	9171.3	9925.7
GDP growth	%	6.0	5.8	6.4	5.3
Inflation (CPI)	%	4.2	8.0	5.5	2.9
Unemployment	%	2.3	2.0	1.9	1.9
Foreign direct investment	% of GDP	-1.6	-2.1	0.9	0.8
Export growth	%	8.8	2.8	6.8	5.8
Import growth	%	14.3	5.3	5.8	5.4
Current account balance	\$ M	-	-	-	-
Public debt	% of GDP	64.9	67.0	68.6	72.1
External debt	\$ M	3495.3	3219.6	3375.2	-
Total debt service	\$ M	171.4	246.9	257.4	-
Net lending/borrowing	% of GDP	-4.9	-8.0	-6.6	-
Tax revenue	% of GDP	14.2	14.2	14.8	-
Government consumption	% of GDP	12.8	12.9	12.6	13.1
Public education spending	% of GDP	4.2	3.8	4.1	-
Public health spending	% of GDP	0.6	0.7	-	-
R&D expenditure	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Military expenditure	% of GDP	3.1	5.4	4.0	-

Sources (as of December 2025): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database.

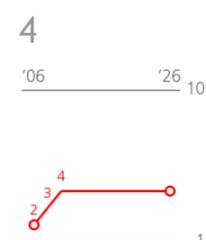
7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

The government's development plan includes a series of initiatives aimed at enhancing the market economy environment. These initiatives aim at the development and expansion of infrastructure, the modernization of the agricultural sector, and the establishment of a manufacturing industry. However, the private sector has historically been segmented into numerous micro and small enterprises, with the majority operating in the informal sector, which still provides more than 90% of employment opportunities. These small enterprises contribute less than 30% to national value creation. In this context, the World Bank has committed an additional \$200 million from 2025 onward to strengthen the legal framework for private sector operations, improve the accessibility and affordability of electricity, and enhance the efficacy of the tax system, among other objectives. According to the latest Business Ready Report (2024), Togo performs above the African average in terms of market entry and freedom of choice with respect to company location; however, it lags behind in the areas of free competition, the financial market and skilled labor. In its Economic Freedom Index, the Heritage Foundation (2024) downgrades Togo particularly due to unfavorable rule of law conditions, ranking the country 32nd out of 47 in Africa with a score of 50.9. Nevertheless, foreign direct investment remains below expectations, with 2023 marking the third consecutive year of a negative balance. Investors from India, Singapore and China have expressed interest in investing in Togo, with China especially seeking to expand its involvement over the next few years.

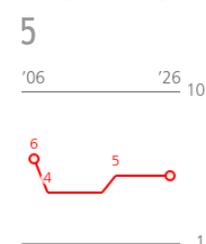
State-owned enterprises continue to play a significant economic role in Togo. In the energy, transportation, cotton, crude oil, phosphate and grain purchasing sectors, the state holds about 60 majority stakes, amounting to as much as 100% of the shares in these enterprises. The IMF (2024) recognizes the pivotal role of these sectors in Togo's future development and argues that enhancing the management, cost awareness and customer orientation of these enterprises is essential.

A variety of commissions have been established under the Ministry of Trade to ensure fair competition conditions in specific economic sectors. However, a comprehensive authority for general competition monitoring does not exist. The Competition Commission, though established by law, appears ineffectual. Togo has not yet acceded to the International Competition Network. At the end of 2024, however, Togo was entrusted with the chairmanship of a committee of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) competition authority. In 2024, a draft law intended to reform the 1999 legal text was made public. This reform is intended to facilitate competition in the future. However, the draft legislation has yet to be enacted. Notably, there are no restrictions on the access of national or international investors. Togo now offers digital access to all information required to

Market organization



Competition policy



establish a company, although the so-called one-stop store for submitting various forms is still under development. Reports indicate that state-owned enterprises often receive preferential treatment over private investors who do not pay unofficial extra fees. The government's increased borrowing, including from national banks, has occasionally led to a crowding-out effect, which has made financing private economic activities more expensive.

The import and export of goods play a significant role in Togo's economy, contributing 58% to its GDP. In 2023, total import and export values were \$3.2 billion and \$1.4 billion, respectively. This dynamic also reflects Togo's pivotal role as a transit hub for the Sahel countries of Burkina Faso and Mali and, following the closure of the borders between Benin and its northern neighbor, the Republic of Niger, for which over 90% of the goods arriving at the port of Lomé are destined. A policy to promote international trade was formulated in 2011 and revised in 2022. The revised policy has been frequently cited but not yet published. The World Bank's latest B-Ready report states that Togo has a relatively well-developed regulatory framework for international trade. However, due to inadequate infrastructure, a lack of official support for importing and exporting goods, and the high cost and time requirements for trading partners, its overall score is comparatively low.

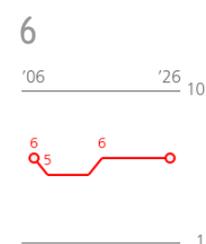
To increase the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreements for the Togolese economy, a project was launched with international support for Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. In Togo, the initiative focuses on increasing stakeholder awareness of the AfCFTA's advantages, as well as on supporting the government in developing specific programs to implement the free trade policy.

Togo's participation in the global trade arena dates to its accession to the WTO in 1995. According to the most recent data (2023), the average simple most favored nation rate is 12%, reflecting a persistent decline over time. A slightly higher rate of 15.9% applies to agricultural products. Export subsidies are generally not granted, and export-oriented companies are offered nearly complete relief from state levies for several years in a free trade zone.

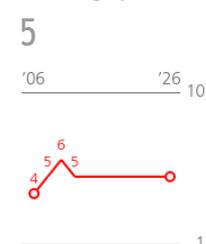
The Togolese banking sector is notable for its dynamism, as evidenced by the presence of 14 banking institutions, many of which are branches of transregional banks. The Union Togolaise de Banque is the only state-owned financial institution. Collectively, these institutions hold deposits amounting to nearly 60% of GDP. The financial infrastructure is further strengthened by 74 microfinance institutions, which mainly address the credit needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

However, the level of financial inclusion in Togo remains below average compared with sub-Saharan African standards. Only 18.6% of adults have savings or current accounts, and just 3.3% have a credit account. This suggests that most of the population continues to depend on traditional forms of saving and borrowing. In

Liberalization of foreign trade



Banking system



addition, banks' lending to the private sector remains below deposit levels and is concentrated on traditional beneficiaries such as the hotel, restaurant, retail and construction sectors. Industrial, craft and agricultural businesses receive a negligible share of loans. The capital adequacy rate of Togolese banks shows that the equity ratio is insufficient given existing risks. The capital adequacy ratio is about 50% below the 11.25% benchmark set for the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Despite the cautious lending policy, the proportion of non-performing loans is high, though it remains below the WAEMU average. Orabank, a Togolese banking institution, was forced to halt its financial operations in November 2024 due to a lack of liquidity. The institution was recapitalized at the end of 2024 through several measures, including selling the majority of its shares to the Vista Group, issuing a bond in the West African market and transferring non-performing loans to a bad bank.

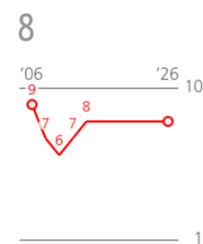
8 | Monetary and fiscal stability

Because Togo is a member of the CFA franc zone and WAEMU, the structure of its banking sector and its financial market policies are inextricably linked to international and regional agreements. The CFA franc (XOF) is pegged to the euro at a fixed exchange rate. This peg has been shown to promote financial stability and, through the adoption of shared standards, has helped maintain relatively low debt levels and inflation rates among WAEMU member countries. However, the lack of monetary flexibility can increase the cost of exports and decrease the cost of imports, potentially hindering domestic production. In addition, a decline in the euro's exchange value against the U.S. dollar can adversely affect the repayment of international loans. The effective exchange rate, which is adjusted by an index weighted according to various criteria, appreciated by 5.4% against the XOF in 2023, thereby impeding Togo's competitiveness.

Since 2009, West African states have campaigned to replace the XOF with their own regional currency, the eco. Initially scheduled for introduction in 2020, this transition has been repeatedly postponed, most recently to 2027. This delay can be partly attributed to the departure of several Sahelian countries from ECOWAS. It is reasonable to assume that this deadline will not be met.

Following a period of heightened inflation, which peaked in summer 2024, the inflation rate in Togo fell below 2% by the end of the year. Rising food prices were a significant factor contributing to overall inflation.

Monetary stability



Recent years have seen a marked increase in Togo's national debt. However, the government expects to reduce this beginning in 2026. Plans are underway to restructure foreign debt, shifting toward more concessional loans and extended maturities. In 2023, public debt reached XOF 3.7 billion, equivalent to 70% of GDP, marking the highest level since 2018. About two-thirds of this debt was raised through local markets. The government has acknowledged that a significant portion of its revenue, exceeding 50%, is now allocated toward debt service, a figure that continues to rise.

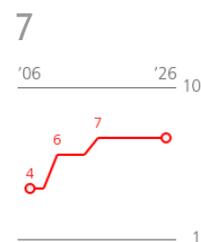
In response to these challenges, the government has devised measures to enhance fiscal stability. It is expected that the sustained growth observed in recent years will persist. Additionally, the foreign trade deficit is anticipated to be mitigated through the promotion of domestic value creation. Increasing tax revenues is also a goal. However, given the current economic landscape, achieving these objectives may pose significant challenges.

Following a brief period of contraction during the global pandemic, Togo's economy has exhibited growth rates of between 5.65% and 6% in recent years, though this growth is currently slowing. According to IMF projections for 2024, a slight decline to 5.3% is anticipated, followed by a recovery to 5.5% per annum in subsequent years. The foreign trade deficit increased to \$1.7 billion between 2020 and 2024, but it is projected to retreat to \$0.6 billion by 2027.

As indicated by international indices, the government has placed a strong emphasis on budgetary discipline. However, there is a strong potential for significant domestic political disputes given the rising expenditures on counter-terrorism relating to the security situation in the northern region. Additionally, the substantial pent-up demand from a growing population for basic services and social security should be taken into account.

The mobilization of national resources through tax revenues has been quite successful in recent years, with state revenues reaching 14.3% of GDP in 2023 compared to just 10% in 2010. The largest share is generated by revenue from international trade through the port of Lomé and from VAT, which is currently set at 18%. Income taxes do not play a major role. However, taxes on companies in the formal sector are an important source of revenue.

Fiscal stability



9 | Private Property

Togo's score on the Heritage Foundation's Property Rights Index for 2024 was just 36.6, and has been persistently low in the past. This phenomenon can be attributed at least in part to the fact that the legal enforcement of property claims is not always guaranteed.

In Togo, land ownership has been governed by the Code Foncier since 2018. This comprehensive legislation, spanning 724 articles across 127 pages, is notoriously difficult to implement. It requires the registration of previously unregistered parcels and, for the first time, mandates notarization of property transfers. However, several years after the law's promulgation, a central register with uniform numbers has yet to be established. The new structure remains nonoperational. From 2019 to 2023, authorities issued 25,841 land titles, representing only a small fraction of all properties. As a result, most land users and owners continue to rely on traditional local laws. This legal vacuum often excludes marginalized farmers – who could previously lease farmland only from traditionally recognized landlords – and particularly women from owning land. Under these circumstances, the increase in legal disputes tends to benefit those with greater influence or the ability to pay higher bribes.

In 2024, the International Land Coalition conducted 10 extensive focus group discussions with farming families and women farmers to examine the extent to which legal regulations on access to land are implemented in practice. These discussions were based on case studies, as empirically valid data on land ownership is sometimes more than a decade old. Notably, traditional and still prevalent succession regulations often disadvantage women, as exemplified by the requirement that women must marry their brothers-in-law or rent land from their sons following the death of their husbands.

In recent years, conditions for private investment in Togo, both domestic and foreign, have improved. The government of Togo has implemented support measures that include a substantial reduction in the application period for company registration, greater digitalization of the financial system to facilitate the payment of fees and taxes, and, in some cases, the establishment of a one-stop shop for starting companies in free trade zones. Official figures indicate that more than 15,000 new companies were founded in 2024 alone, with about 15% of these being foreign-owned. For the past six years, the annual number of new companies established has consistently exceeded 10,000. However, there is limited data regarding the nature of their business activities or on the rate of company dissolution.

Approximately 20 state-owned enterprises or state majority shareholdings play a pivotal role in key sectors such as energy, water and transportation. In a recent development, three companies in the cotton, banking and telecommunications sectors underwent privatization, with the state acquiring a minority stake in each entity.

Property rights



Private enterprise



10 | Welfare Regime

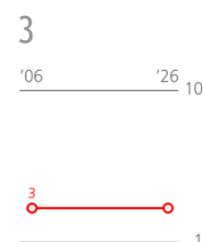
A high proportion of the population lives in poverty. A recent government study reports that the rate of multidimensional poverty declined from 37.1% to 28.8% over three years (2018 to 2021). The Global Hunger Index 2024 found that the prevalence of food insecurity in Togo had been significantly reduced since the turn of the millennium; however, conditions in rural areas, especially in the northern part of the country, remain more challenging. Children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, since the first years of life are critical for future productivity and health. Togo's score of 0.43 in this area indicates that children attain only 43% of their physical and intellectual potential. Recent humanitarian appeals by the World Food Programme and the UNHCR indicate that the country's social safety nets are inadequate to the task of addressing absolute poverty. For example, school feeding programs reach only 17% of pupils, a situation that undermines learning outcomes and school attendance, particularly for those who do not receive benefits.

In 2021, parliament passed a law mandating universal health insurance, providing fundamental coverage for all citizens enrolled in the insurance program and specialized basic coverage for those unable to contribute. The benefits include medical consultations, hospitalization, necessary medication, medical examinations and treatments, as well as all services related to pregnancy. At the beginning of 2024, the president announced the comprehensive introduction of the system. The project has received €70 million in funding from the World Bank since 2021, but it remains to be seen whether this support will result in a sustainable system.

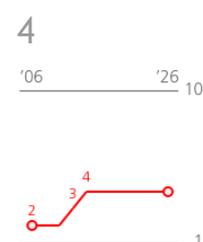
The state pension scheme is available exclusively to civil servants, public sector employees and members of the military. Additionally, there is a pension insurance scheme that employees or the self-employed can contribute to at a rate of 16.5% of their income. Individuals can access benefits from this scheme at age 60 or earlier in cases of disability. However, this coverage applies only to those in the formal sector. Unemployment insurance is not available.

The constitution and most other legal documents explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender, age, origin, religion, political conviction and sexual orientation. However, there are specific exceptions to this prohibition. For example, homosexual acts are prohibited and punishable by law, and same-sex marriages – even if performed abroad – are not recognized. Additionally, even advocating for liberalization in this area is punishable by law. Public opinion is largely against homosexuality; in surveys, 87% of respondents have indicated that they do not want LGBTQ+ people living in their neighborhood. In contrast, there is a notable level of tolerance toward other ethnic groups, with more than 90% of people expressing no reservations about residing alongside other ethnic populations. Almost half of the Togolese population firmly believes that ethnicity influences how a person is treated, for instance in legal proceedings or interactions with government authorities.

Social safety nets



Equal opportunity



While boys and girls attend primary school at about the same rate, the percentages of girls attending secondary and tertiary education drop sharply, as reflected by the female-male ratios of 1.0, 0.8 and 0.6 respectively at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in the World Bank's Gender Parity Index. A total of 67% of the population is literate, with a divide between males and females: 80% of the male population is literate, but only 55% of women.

The religious rights of the populace are not subject to restrictions. There is a prevailing atmosphere of peaceful coexistence among different religious groups.

However, political rights are not enforced on an equal basis. Opposition supporters face harassment that can result in short-term detention or imprisonment. Participants in demonstrations are subjected to violence by security forces. Even prominent opposition leaders are not immune to restrictions; some have chosen political exile over further political activity in the country. The legal framework regarding equal rights for men and women is favorable, with the World Bank (2024) rating it well above the global average. In the Global Gender Gap Ranking 2024, Togo achieved 77th place out of 142 countries, indicating a favorable position in a West African context. However, in practice, women encounter various forms of discrimination. For instance, 25% of girls under age 18 are married, and only 24% of women have access to contraceptives. Furthermore, 17% of young women have children before reaching adulthood. It is common for men to demand sexual concessions from women and, if these are refused, to resort to violence. Within families, women's right to have a say is limited; a third are exposed to violence in the family. A lack of education is a factor in these disadvantages, as only 58% of women complete elementary school.

11 | Economic Performance

Togo is one of 32 African countries classified by the United Nations as a least developed country. Despite relatively high growth rates and the development of per capita income, it will retain this status due to continued poor access to education and health care facilities for large sections of the population.

Since 1990, per capita income has risen steadily and significantly, reaching \$3,071 in 2023. However, this figure remains at the lower end of regional averages. According to World Bank data, foreign direct investment accounted for 0.4% of GDP in 2023. Inflation rates increased significantly during and after the global pandemic, peaking at 8% in 2022. These rates then declined to 5.3% in 2023 and 2.1% in 2024, a development partially attributable to the introduction of public subsidies for fuel and food. The unemployment rate stands at 1.8%, which is notably low. However, unemployment affects young people more acutely, with a rate of 3.4% amid this population, as well as women, who also experience above-average unemployment rates. The widespread prevalence of informal employment in West African countries, including Togo, complicates the interpretation of these statistics, which largely reflect

Output strength

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only the formal sector. In Togo, informal workers account for 92.3% of the workforce. Informal employment is characterized by precarious working conditions, a high proportion of temporary or seasonal jobs, below-average wages, and a lack of social security.

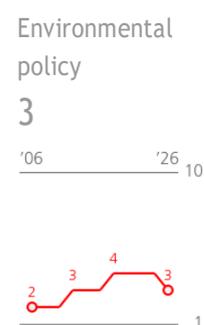
Togo's balance of payments has been chronically in deficit, with this deficit reaching about \$300 million in 2024 and projected to remain at this level in the following years. At the same time, the nation's foreign debt has climbed to its current peak of nearly 70% of GDP, with the IMF expecting further increases in the coming years.

12 | Sustainability

Despite contributing a negligible proportion (0.02%) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, Togo is disproportionately impacted by extreme weather events, including flooding and drought, as well as the long-term adverse effects of global warming on humans, animals and plants. The rise in sea water levels has caused coastal erosion, leading to the destruction of the livelihoods of fishermen and plantation producers. However, anthropogenic activities at the national level have also resulted in substantial environmental damage. For example, approximately 16% of the country's land area is affected by bushfires annually, particularly in the northern provinces. The forests, estimated at just under a third of the country's total area in 2020, have diminished by 14%, today covering more than 76,000 hectares. Primary forests have been especially hard hit. Inappropriate land management techniques and improper use of pesticides contribute to soil degradation and decrease biodiversity.

Legislative proposals for the protection of natural resources are often announced, yet as a general rule they are not implemented. According to USAID (2024), there is an absence of systematic reporting in vital areas relating to environmental protection that would allow assessment of the impact of the legal framework. The current environmental protection law was passed in 2008 and, according to experts, does not provide a sufficient basis for effective resource protection given current challenges. Despite the 2011 decree mandating that environmental audits be conducted for development projects, there is no evidence of its implementation.

Financing of ecological and climate-related initiatives is predominantly external. In 2023, six countries in the Volta Basin launched a collaborative effort, supported by more than \$7 million in international funding, to address natural resource degradation. The five-year initiative has not yet become fully operational.



Notwithstanding prevailing challenges, public expenditure on education recently (2023) declined to 3.8% of GDP, despite conflicting declarations. In previous years it was consistently above 4%. In the HDR 2024, Togo set a target of 13 years of expected school attendance, the highest value among LDCs.

About 82% of 10-year-old pupils are unable to read and understand an age-appropriate text. The primary education completion rate is 87% for girls and 91% for boys, while the rate for secondary education is notably lower. This is attributable to an inadequate learning environment for pupils, characterized by schools that are in poor condition and often lacking in adequate equipment. A significant number of pupils arrive at school without having had a proper breakfast, and not all school cafeterias are well supplied. The pedagogical competencies of teachers, particularly in rural regions where class sizes can exceed 40 students, do not meet contemporary standards.

R&D is instrumental in enhancing a nation's welfare and preparing it for future challenges by generating new knowledge, innovative products and advanced processes. The Global Innovation Index (GII), a composite metric used to assess innovation capacity and performance, provides a quantitative measure for evaluating this phenomenon. According to the GII, Togo ranked 117th worldwide in 2024, placing it in the median tier among African countries examined. A modest 8% increase in scientific publications was documented over the long term. No figures on current R&D expenditures are available; however, in 2014, this was recorded at 0.2% of GDP.

Education policy /
R&D

4

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Governance

I. Level of Difficulty

The government faces numerous structural impediments, including a high proportion of the population living in absolute poverty, low levels of education and training for most workers employed in the informal sector, and poorly developed physical infrastructure. Compounding these challenges, there has been a surge in attacks by jihadist groups on government facilities, security forces and the civilian population, particularly in the northern regions of the country.

According to UNDP estimates for 2017 (no later data available), 37.6% of the population lives under conditions of multidimensional poverty, with an additional 23.8% at risk of falling into this category. The combined total of these figures approximates the African average. In rural areas, the subsistence economy remains the predominant economic activity, while in urban areas the majority of workers are employed in a precarious informal sector.

The transport network is underdeveloped. Lomé has one of the few deep-sea ports on the Gulf of Guinea, attracting goods from around the world for onward transport to the Sahel or neighboring countries. These transport routes are regularly renewed and expanded. Conversely, rural infrastructure remains suboptimal, characterized by poorly maintained dirt roads that hinder the development of rural regions and their integration into national and international markets.

Moreover, access to a continuous supply of electricity remains inadequate for both individuals and businesses. Even within the urban coastal region, power outages are a recurrent phenomenon, and in rural areas, only about one-third of settlements have electricity connections. Togo depends on electricity imports from neighboring countries, particularly Nigeria and Ghana, which together cover 40% of current demand. Togo was heavily affected by a crisis involving electricity supply in Nigeria, leading to load shedding in Togo for several months during 2024. The cost of electricity is notably high by regional standards. Government and international initiatives have targeted school facilities and health centers as key areas for improvement. However, these efforts have been insufficient to address widespread deficiencies in infrastructure and equipment, as evidenced by numerous individual reports.

Structural
constraints

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A significant proportion of the Togolese population – more than 10% of the total – has chosen to reside in other countries, according to the first census of the foreign office among Togolese abroad. Most left their country during the political unrest at the end of the 1990s or during the term of the current president’s father. The majority of these migrants are seeking new opportunities in neighboring African countries such as Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire. In contrast, those with higher educational attainment often migrate to Europe. France has become a preferred destination for many skilled professionals, with a significant number of Togolese doctors choosing to practice there. The outflow of skilled labor has a considerable impact on the country’s future prospects. Remittances from Togolese diaspora members contribute between 7% and 9% of the country’s GDP. Efforts to encourage members of the diaspora to invest more in their home country have met with only moderate success so far.

Prior to 1966, there were only four civil society organizations of religious provenance engaged in charitable work. A decade later, this number increased to 20, which had collectively formed an association. By 1986, the figure had again doubled. Following the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association in 1990, there was a marked proliferation of non-governmental organizations, with the number reaching approximately 400 by 2001. The “small is beautiful” movement that emerged in industrialized countries during this period likely contributed to this development, as it prompted ministers and other state actors in developing countries to establish their own NGOs. However, current official statistics may not provide a complete or accurate picture of the NGO landscape, as they frequently include only entities that have formally signed host agreements with the government. The online portal “Go Africa” currently lists 368 entries in the NGO category for Togo, which is also likely an underestimate. According to the WHO (2017), there are 365 active NGOs in the health sector alone. A significant number of organizations based in the capital are managed by representatives of the intellectual elite. These organizations depend significantly on funding from foreign partners for their operations. State subsidies are rare and large-scale fundraising is carried out only by religious communities. This dynamic creates a situation in which the sustainability of initiatives is not assured, leaving the future of NGO operations contingent on external financial support.

A comparative analysis of civil society dynamics in Togo reveals its relative weakness compared to neighboring countries. Many organizations lack a strong connection with the local population. These organizations do not attempt to influence policies in the social sector to benefit their clients, and there appears to be no willingness among government agencies to do so either. Instead, these organizations operate according to project-specific objectives. Effective coordination among these actors is notably absent, and they compete with each other for external resources.

Civil society traditions

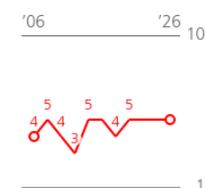
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The legislative framework and domestic policies in place – and particularly their application by the administration – have been identified as significant impediments to resolving political conflicts without recourse to violence. This is evidenced by the frequent disruption of opposition meetings and demonstrations, which are often banned or violently dispersed. The opposition’s repeated boycotts of elections are also indicative of this dynamic. Furthermore, critical reporting is frequently suppressed, and numerous journalists have been prosecuted or compelled to leave the country. The government’s lack of transparency further exacerbates the situation, as it allows rumors and false reports to flourish without adequate scrutiny. The most recent amendments to the constitution and electoral laws have further intensified rifts between the opposition and the government. Compounding this issue is the deteriorating security situation in the north. Even though the gendarmerie and military have so far remained loyal to the president, tensions are foreseeable if the terrorist threat in the north is not effectively contained. Throughout the Sudano-Sahel zone, disputes over water and arable land are a recurring feature of interactions between semi-nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers. The majority of these pastoralists are members of the Peul community, who traverse the entire belt between the coastal and Sahel states, undeterred by national borders, to graze their animals. While the Peul population comprises approximately 128,000 individuals – constituting a negligible percentage of the Togolese population – they are perceived, due to their Islamic beliefs, as collaborators in the face of Islamist aggression in the northern regions of the country, providing refuge and sustenance to terrorists. The veracity of these accusations remains uncertain; however, they are often used as a pretext by farmers to strengthen their position in legal disputes.

Conflict intensity

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II. Governance Performance

14 | Steering Capability

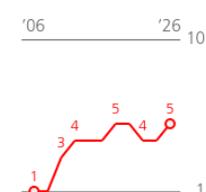
The annual national development plan is based on the Road Map 2025, adopted in mid-2020. This document sets out 42 priority projects and reforms. The goal of the reforms is to recalibrate the measures previously listed in the Development Plan 2018 – 2022 and assign them to the appropriate government departments. The plan is structured around three top-priority axes: the first is inclusion and social harmony, the second is job creation based on economic foundations, and the third is the modernization of the country and its regulatory environment for economic development. Of the planned projects, 13 are given special priority for their strategic importance and socioeconomic impact; reforming support for small- and medium-sized Togolese companies is therefore the most important reform. To ensure the effective execution of this initiative, a permanent secretariat has been established

Question

Score

Prioritization

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within the Ministry of Finance that is responsible for overseeing the program's implementation and providing regular progress reports. Despite impediments to the road map, including the effects of the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the government remains committed to the program.

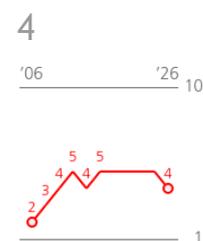
While the overarching responsibility for individual projects lies with a single ministry, several other departments are usually involved, which significantly increases the coordination effort and ties up scarce human and financial resources. Despite efforts to enhance the functional and managerial capacity of the public administration, including the ministries, the establishment of separate project implementation units is imperative for the execution of numerous projects, particularly those with external funding.

The implementation of the Road Map 2025, the country's development plan, has been significantly delayed. As of mid-2024, 49 of the 267 sub-projects had been fully realized, 189 were being implemented and 29 had not yet been initiated. According to the evaluation of reports from the units responsible for steering, physical implementation was 52.2% (although different official report sets a mark of 75%) and financial implementation was 34.8%, although these figures vary from ministry to ministry. Often, the official figures, for example in the social sector, do not correspond with evaluations by the United Nations and other bilateral and multilateral agencies, although their surveys also date back years. A comprehensive evaluation of national initiatives remains elusive due to a lack of transparency and clarity in the available data.

However, at the macroeconomic level, a comparison can be made between the targets and ambitions outlined in the Road Map and the results achieved, at least for key indicators. For instance, the government predicted annual economic growth rates of 4.7%, 6.1%, 7.0%, 7.5% and 7.8% for the years 2021 to 2025. However, according to IMF data and estimates, the actual figures are approximately two percentage points lower. The budget deficit was expected to decrease from 5.5% to 3% of GDP between 2020 and 2025. According to recent calculations by the World Bank, the deficit will reach 6.1% in 2024. Furthermore, public debt was planned to decrease to 51.7% of GDP by 2025; however, the IMF (2025) anticipates it will reach nearly 70% in 2024. Notably, initiatives such as the provision of biometric identity documents to the entire population were announced only toward the end of 2024. A strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the quality of medical emergency care was initiated in August 2024. Furthermore, the construction of 20,000 social housing units, a key component of the 2025 agenda, was initially hindered by the absence of a comprehensive technical suitability study of the designated construction area, which became available only in May 2024.

It can be posited that the professional, technical and administrative capacities of the responsible ministries, as well as the financial viability of the planned activities, were not adequately considered during the formulation of the five-year plan. The political

Implementation



determination to modernize the socioeconomic framework is indisputable. Nevertheless, given the suboptimal implementation rate, the plans must be regarded as overly ambitious. While acknowledging the achievements, it is crucial to recognize that persistent disappointment has led to a decline in public trust in state authorities.

In light of prior experience with ambitious planning and ultimately moderate outcomes, it is fair to ask whether the government has genuinely developed the capacity to value and utilize independent monitoring and policy evaluation as a management tool. There is a pervasive sense that lower-level bureaucrats are hastily presenting implementation rates for planned projects, the validity of which is questionable. On the one hand, responsible officials can cite the lack of sufficient financial resources to justify the inability to achieve targets, while on the other hand, they often deflect responsibility to other departments. Prevailing patronage dynamics imply that sanctions are imposed with restraint, motivated by a desire to preserve the loyalty of those responsible. Finally, the government's actions predominantly draw praise in a press subject to high levels of official pressure, while setbacks tend not to be covered.

The implementation of numerous development projects relies heavily on external funding, which influences the scope and design of these initiatives through consultation processes with bilateral and multilateral actors, who in turn are subject to certain restrictions.

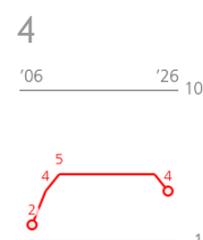
Togo has been able to mobilize domestic revenue through taxes and levies. Still, the government's flexibility is constrained by its growing indebtedness, which reflects both domestic and international debt.

15 | Resource Efficiency

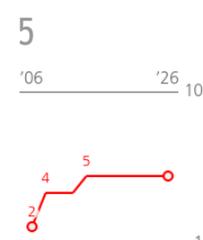
According to publicly available data, the number of employees and civil servants working in Togo's public sector reached 84,000 by the end of 2025. The salaries of these individuals accounted for about 14% of the national budget, representing a 10% increase compared to the previous year. It is important to note that official figures vary by ministry and may exceed the numbers presented here. As a result, it is not possible to determine the exact input-output ratios.

The performance of individual government sectors is rarely evaluated. Additionally, available studies are often outdated or focus on specific regions, limiting the ability to obtain a comprehensive and current understanding of government administration performance. Conventional reports suggest improvements, yet they rarely provide empirically substantiated data to support these claims. Studies addressing quality and outcomes are conducted intermittently, typically in anticipation of externally funded projects, but these are often limited in scope, as has been shown by select case studies in the education sector. From the perspective of the population, as regularly surveyed by Afrobarometer (2023; 2024), government services are perceived as inadequate.

Policy learning



Efficient use of assets



In general, employment in the public sector depends on the completion of competitive exams, though this requirement is not always applied uniformly at the regional level. These exams are formally announced. However, it remains uncertain whether candidate selection is based solely on qualifications. Numerous publications by Togolese online media based abroad, over which the government has no control, report irregularities. For instance, in one case, the lists of applicants and selected candidates were made public, and at times, names appeared on the latter list that were not present on the former.

The national budget consistently shows a deficit, which is addressed through the accumulation of new debt. Supplementary budgets often result in additional expenditures that are not covered by higher revenue. The public debt-to-GDP ratio reached nearly 70% in 2024. In response, the government unveiled a strategy in 2024 aimed at improving the management of the debt burden. Among the proposed measures is a restructuring of debt to more favorable terms and borrowing at the national level. However, even this last measure can lead to nationally available capital being allocated to the budget for current tasks instead of flowing into productive investments.

The Court of Audit reports on the implementation of state budgets at both the national and decentralized levels in an irregular manner. The most recent report (2024) addresses government expenditure in 2022 and censures numerous ministries for either failing to provide pertinent information or for the lack of comprehensibility in their reports, thereby impeding effective oversight. Local authorities are audited infrequently and irregularly, and the audited periods are often far in the past, offering minimal opportunities for identifying and implementing improvements in local budget management. The Court of Audit lacks the authority to impose sanctions, and such measures are seldom demanded by parliament. A notable instance of the Court's influence occurred at the end of 2023, when its representatives were called upon by parliament to substantiate its critical observations regarding the allocation of funds to combat the pandemic. The ministers implicated were compelled to defend their actions. Nevertheless, the report ultimately yielded no further consequences.

The government's official commitment to democratic principles is evident. However, the gap between the autocratic form of governance and the nominally democratic institutions poses a significant challenge to this commitment. The president and his inner circle have shown a clear inclination to perpetuate their hold on power, as seen in the most recent constitutional amendments. Notably, there was no discord on this issue between Faure Gnassingbè and Prime Minister Victoire Tomegah Dogbè, whom the president appointed and who has been his closest confidante for a decade as head of the presidential office. After the transitional government established in 2024 concludes, the president is set to assume the prime minister's role himself in 2025, retaining his original powers and authorities. This transition could simplify government coordination, yet it would come at the expense of the system of checks and balances essential for democratic governance.

Policy
coordination

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The government formed in 2024 consists of 35 ministers, which hinders coordination among individual departments. In theory, all ministers, along with the prime minister and the president, are supposed to meet weekly, and the Secretary-General of the Government and the state secretaries of the respective ministries are expected to meet monthly for coordination. However, there is no documentation of these meetings, such as minutes or announcements. The ministries' inability to achieve the objectives assigned to them from the Road Map 2025 with their own resources has led to competition among ministries for funding from foreign partners.

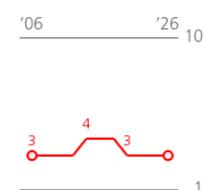
The government has repeatedly emphasized that corruption is a significant impediment to development progress and to maintaining the population's trust in the state. A comprehensive set of regulations aimed at preventing corruption exists; however, their implementation remains inconsistent. The High Authority for the Prevention of and the Fight against Corruption (Haute Autorité de prévention et de lutte contre la corruption et les infractions assimilées, HAPLUCIA), established in 2015, holds seminars to educate employees of state institutions on existing laws that prohibit the acceptance of benefits. Despite the adoption of a national anti-corruption strategy in 2022, no tangible results have been made public yet. As of the time of writing, the most recent entry on the HAPLUCIA Facebook page was dated November 2023, and the internet address listed redirected to a whimsical founder's website in the United States.

The country's strategic location, with borders shared with three other states, fosters extensive trade relations with several West African states, creating a conducive environment for transnational criminal activities, including drug smuggling, gold trafficking and, in certain instances, the counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals. In recent years, several ships flying the Togolese flag have been seized for smuggling weapons. According to ENACT, an agency funded by the EU and established by Interpol among other entities, high government officials are believed to be complicit in these illicit activities, as outlined in the entity's most recent report on organized crime (2023). The action group tasked with combating money laundering established by ECOWAS has expressed concerns regarding the absence of evidence-based information and inadequate documentation of such incidents at the national level. According to the Basel Institute for Governance (2024), Togo is among the top 30 (out of 160) countries in the money-laundering risk index.

Approximately 10% of Togo's export revenue comes from the mining industry. However, a review of available data shows significant shortcomings in the transparency and comprehensiveness of this information. A 2024 report by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) highlights a lack of comprehensive and accurate data on production levels and revenue beneficiaries. While the government's efforts to improve documentation are noted, the sector remains opaque because the responsibilities of state authorities are unclear. The EITI rates overall implementation of its standards in the mining sector as "moderate," with the subcategory of transparency classified as "fairly low."

Anti-corruption policy

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16 | Consensus-Building

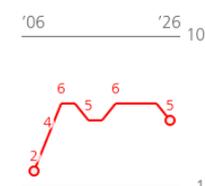
In the context of the 2024 parliamentary elections and in preparation for the 2025 presidential elections, divisions between the government and the opposition have intensified once again. Depending on their heavily personalized political orientation, the elites behind each side either have access to political offices and attractive positions in the administration or are marginalized and sometimes restrained with repressive measures. As a result, there is a lack of cooperation and communication between the two political camps. The issue is not rooted in ideological differences. Consequently, opposition parties have not put forward a comprehensive reform program to address the prevailing economic and political challenges. Instead, their primary objective appears to be the replacement of the incumbent leadership. This suggests an implicit consensus that the status quo should be maintained, with only an exchange of the existing political elite for new individuals in positions of authority.

The aforementioned principles apply in the context of market economy orientation. The model itself is not subject to scrutiny as long as it aligns with the interests of the ruling groups. The export orientation of the economy is consistent with this model, as it fosters economic growth and facilitates the accumulation of surplus. However, this economic growth is not widely shared because the extractive sectors – phosphate, clinker and unprocessed agricultural products – employ relatively few workers compared to well-developed value chains. As a result, there is no objection from the opposition to the fundamental economic model.

Government representatives and ruling party officials display a paradoxical approach to democratic governance. In practice, they make efforts to maintain a democratic facade, often to gain recognition from international partners, particularly a significant portion of the EU. In reality, autocratic power relations are maintained and expanded in covert ways. At the same time, there has been a noticeable increase in expressions of sympathy for alternative forms of government. For example, Alain Foka, a journalist and activist from Cameroon, has established the headquarters of MANSSAH – an organization heavily influenced by his own vision – in Togo. The inaugural meeting, endorsed and attended by Foreign Minister Robert Dussey, clearly distanced itself from European democratic practices. In a conversation with the newly elected president of the National Assembly, the Chinese ambassador emphasized the similarities between the two parliamentary systems and pointed to opportunities for mutual learning. In an interview with VoxAfrica on Jan. 16, 2025, Foreign Minister Dussey acknowledged that Togo could potentially join the CES, a newly formed group of West African states with military governments. He also noted that a public opinion poll would likely reveal that at least 70% of the population would support such membership. This view aligns with the results of an Afrobarometer survey in 2024, which found that less than half of the Togolese population opposes, in principle, the establishment of a single-party regime or a military dictatorship.

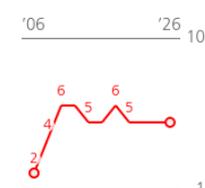
Consensus on goals

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Anti-democratic actors

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The government's current power structure has resulted in a lack of initiatives to address clear political disparities. The existing balance of power is reinforced by a nepotistic system. Togolese sociologist Koffi Améssou Adaba notes that the general voting behavior of Togolese voters is shaped by three factors: the regional origin of the candidates, their ability to mobilize state resources for their respective regions and the provision of material incentives to their voters. Although opposition parties are also attempting to field candidates with the appropriate "pedigree," they typically have less persuasive power than the established majority competitors because they have not yet had the opportunity to direct state resources to "their" regions.

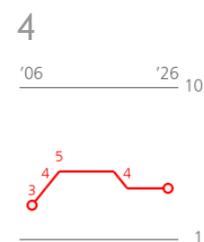
In an effort to enhance political discourse, a national consultation of political actors was established in 2021. However, the opposition views this initiative as ineffective, calling it a unilateral simulacrum of genuine exchange. In contrast, the government maintains that the presence of a diverse array of opposition parties demonstrates a shared commitment to the nation's future and asserts that the forum has been successful. Given the government's past actions, it is not possible to assume it is genuinely interested in mediating conflicts. Opposition parties have indicated they do not consider these meetings to be an effective channel for expressing their concerns.

Despite the occasional expression of opinion by civil society groups, churches or trade unions as representatives of organized society, these entities exert negligible influence over political decisions. Except for the trade unions, there is no institutional framework conducive to effective exchange.

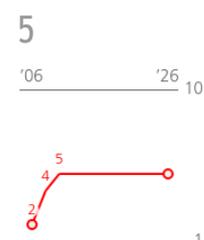
The Catholic Church and leading politically active NGOs have voiced strong criticism of the government's policies, most recently regarding the constitutional amendments for the transition to the Fifth Republic. These organizations often align with opposition representatives to release joint statements, though the impact of these statements on the political agenda remains negligible. Conversely, frequent interactions occur between civil society and international actors, with certain funded programs implemented through NGOs. The evaluation of externally funded programs often incorporates the perspective of civil society, and the resulting conclusions and recommendations may be attributable, in part, to their involvement.

To facilitate exchange between employees and employers, a National Council for Social Dialogue (Conseil National de Dialogue Social, Conseil national de défense et de sécurité (CNDS)) was established in 2008. This council includes representatives from both groups as well as the government, which is also the largest formal employer in Togo. The CNDS's annual cycle of action involves the submission of a compendium of grievances by trade union representatives to the council, which are then disseminated to the relevant authorities for further action. Other activities are not reported. On the whole, the CNDS appears to be dysfunctional.

Cleavage /
conflict
management



Public
consultation



In the aftermath of the violent upheavals that occurred between 2003 and 2005, the High Commission for Reconciliation and the Reinforcement of National Unity (Haut Commissariat à la Reconciliation et au Renforcement de l'Unité Nationale, HCRRUN) was established in 2013 with the mandate to identify and provide compensation to victims. This initiative has continued to the present, with a current emphasis on the prevention of electoral violence. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission presented its final report in 2017. It investigated political violence and human rights violations from 1958 – 2005. Key results included extensive investigations and hearings, recommendations for reconciliation and reforms, a reparation program for victims, and efforts to strengthen the rule of law. To date, the Commission has been successful in commemorating the victims' names and partially successful in providing restitution of material value to victims' families. The government's efforts to address reconciliation issues are ongoing, though still insufficient. For instance, on December 19, 2024, the HCRRUN organized a meeting to discuss the achievements and challenges of reconciliation policies. This event, which involved various segments of society, represents a crucial step in Togo's efforts to enhance national reconciliation through a transitional justice approach.

17 | International Cooperation

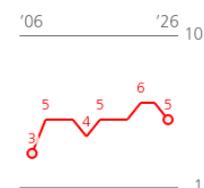
The Togolese government has relied on grants and loans from external partners to implement its ambitious development agenda and address its budget deficit. In 2022, official development assistance totaled approximately \$430 million (current), down from an all-time high of \$561 million in 2020, a period that coincided with the global pandemic. This accounted for 32.5% of the national budget in 2022, a decrease from 52.7% in 2020. Togo's primary partners in this area are the World Bank, followed by the EU, China, France, Germany and the United States.

The design and execution of joint development projects are typically carried out through a consultative process, with a key stipulation that these projects align with the strategic objectives outlined in the Road Map development agenda, which is itself consistent with the SDGs. However, not all proposed projects can be implemented, because financial partners often prioritize their own agendas and interests within these processes. A significant proportion of feasibility studies are conducted with external support, and foreign implementing organizations and consulting companies are involved in both the implementation and evaluation of projects, influencing the specific design of the measures. At times, the availability of financial resources presents opportunities that are capitalized on, if necessary relabeled and integrated into development planning.

The deployment of Togolese experts is extensive in most programs. While this suggests that local expertise is integrated into the planning and implementation processes, enabling operational plans to be adapted to local realities, it also results in the national administration's loss of qualified experts who are offered higher salaries by foreign companies.

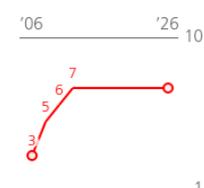
Reconciliation

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Effective use of support

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The nation's military faces significant challenges in countering terrorist threats along its northern border, necessitating external support as its armed forces grapple with the complexities of hybrid warfare. In this context, the United States, China, France and Rwanda have made significant contributions by providing material support, expertise and training to Togolese military personnel within their respective countries. A trade-off may occur if the population or neighboring states perceive international support as invasive or threatening. So far, military assistance has not succeeded in eradicating the threat.

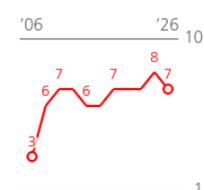
The Togolese government is highly active at the regional and international levels, particularly through the initiatives of Foreign Minister Robert Dussey. It is a member of all U.N. suborganizations and has ratified the majority of international agreements. Togo maintains a consistent reporting mechanism for the status of its implementation of various treaties, including those related to labor standards as stipulated by the ILO and the promotion of human rights. This commitment to reporting is further underscored by its active involvement in subsequent evaluation meetings. However, the implementation of these recommendations remains inconsistent. Togo is part of several other international organizations, including the International Organization of Francophonie since 2019 and, since 2022, the Commonwealth. It participates in seven international peace missions.

In terms of foreign affairs, Togo pursues a policy of nonalignment, and the foreign minister is an energetic advocate of pan-Africanism and the independence of African countries from foreign – particularly Western – dominance. The country prioritizes constructive relations with its primary supporters, including the EU, France, Germany and China, while also seeking to enhance cooperation with emerging actors such as Türkiye and Russia, as evidenced by the establishment of a Russian embassy in Lomé announced at the end of 2024.

The government's credibility with its international partners is undermined by the sluggish implementation of joint programs, deficient impact monitoring of projects and recurrent proclamations of legislative initiatives that often go unaccomplished. Political decision-making processes are not transparent. However, Togo's geographic proximity to the Sahel region – a hotbed of jihadist activity – positions it as a "frontline state" in the global struggle to contain the threat of terrorism. Its stability is of paramount importance to the broader region and, as such, to the international community.

Credibility

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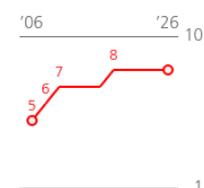


Togo's involvement in major regional and continental alliances, including the AU, ECOWAS and WAEMU, highlights its role in African political affairs. The country's participation in the governing bodies of these organizations is noteworthy, particularly its rotational involvement in various capacities. In 2025, the ninth Pan-African Congress is scheduled to take place in Lomé, after previously being hosted by Johannesburg in 2014. This event is part of the AU's Decade of African Roots and Diasporas, a proposal initiated by Togo. The country is actively promoting the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), anticipating that Lomé's strategic position as a deep-sea port will yield substantial economic advantages, at least in the near term.

Togo's foreign policy emphasizes maintaining positive relations with the Sahel states, which have also seen their standing in ECOWAS decline following recent military coups. Unlike other member states, Togo has not imposed strict sanctions on the new rulers, who have left that regional body and created the new Confederation of Sahel States (CES), also known as the Alliance of Sahel States. Instead, Togo has maintained dialogue with these leaders. This approach has brought notable economic benefits: While Benin's border with Niger remains closed and much of the port of Cotonou's capacity is going unused, a significant share of goods destined for Niger is being redirected to Lomé and transported to Niamey via Burkina Faso. The foreign minister has not ruled out Togo joining the CES, though it remains uncertain whether such a move would benefit the country. Notably, Togolese armed forces have participated in joint military exercises with troops from the CES and Chad seeking to contain terrorist threats more effectively.

Regional cooperation

8



Strategic Outlook

In the coming years, Togo will continue to grapple with significant political, economic and social challenges.

Primarily, this involves the imperative to contain the terrorist threat along the northern border with Burkina Faso. Bolstering the security forces, which must be prepared for the hybrid warfare waged by jihadists, must go hand in hand with intensified efforts to improve living conditions for the rural population in the Savanes region. Second, it will be essential to continue the effort to reduce disparities between rural and urban areas and between the northern and southern parts of the nation. This requires investment in physical infrastructure such as secondary transportation routes, educational institutions, health care, water and sanitation facilities, and electrical grids. In addition, increasing spending on skilled personnel is necessary to unlock their potential.

Third, the government should continue its efforts to restructure and stabilize public debt, reduce borrowing on regional and international financial markets, and prioritize obtaining concessional loans from international financial institutions if it cannot secure a larger volume of official development assistance grants. Fourth, efforts to promote private companies that increase domestic value creation must continue. Although liberalizing rules, laws and bureaucratic regulations is important, it is not the primary focus at this stage. The government's efforts should concentrate on ensuring a secure supply of energy, raw materials and skilled workers trained in a high-quality education system.

Fifth, the increasing polarization of political camps and the suppression of critical voices threaten domestic security. To confront these challenges, efforts must be made to realign the political balance of power and achieve national reconciliation.

It is evident that Togo is ill-equipped to achieve this objective on its own or with the support of neighboring countries alone. Involvement from the international community is essential. This would mean the provision of both diplomatic and material assistance, particularly in the areas of security and development policy. Prevailing domestic political conditions in Togo currently create significant obstacles to mobilizing additional resources at the international level. A careful analysis of the issues nonetheless supports increasing funding for development and security policy measures. It is important that ongoing political dialogue continues to highlight the democratic deficits that persist from the international partners' perspective without imposing specific conditions. Civil society, as a catalyst for political transformation, deserves support to help it implement sociopolitical reforms.