Togo

Country Overview

Politics

Togo is a presidential republic in West Africa. President Faure Gnassingbé was elected in 2005. Fighting between the opposition and security forces over Gnassingbé’s presidency caused thousands of Togolese people to flee to Benin and Ghana.¹ He has subsequently been re-elected twice for five-year terms with no term limits. Gnassingbé is the son of previous President Eyadeam.² According to the U.S. Department of State, the most recent election in April 2015 was deemed “generally free and fair” by international observers.³ The U.S. Department of State noted that there were logistical challenges with Togo’s elections⁴ and opposition groups have reported changes to electoral procedures that disadvantage non-governing parties.⁵

Economy

Togo is classified by the World Bank as a low-income economy.⁶ According to the World Bank, Togo’s GDP growth has been relatively robust, averaging approximately five percent over the past three years, which is higher than the GDP growth of most sub-Saharan countries. Togo’s economic growth is driven mostly by the agricultural and extractive industries. Agriculture alone accounts for approximately half of Togo’s GDP and employs over 60 percent of Togo’s workforce. Togo’s economy has been negatively affected by Nigeria’s economic slowdown and lower commodity prices for some of its main exports.⁷

Togo’s main export commodities are cotton, phosphates, coffee, and cocoa. Threats to Togo’s economy include periodic droughts, water pollution, and slash-and-burn agricultural practices that have led to deforestation.⁸

Togo has been engaged in business reforms and large infrastructure projects in order to attract more foreign investment, which is a high priority for the Togolese government.⁹

Social/Human Development

There are 37 tribes in Togo, the largest being Ewe, Mina, and Kabre.¹⁰ The Togolese population is growing and almost 60 percent of the population is under 15 years of age. Education access is improving in the country since the government eliminated enrollment fees for primary school, but girls are still underrepresented, enrollment in secondary and tertiary schools remains low, and the educational quality is questionable.¹¹
Poverty levels have been slowly decreasing in Togo, with 55.1 percent of the population living below the national poverty line in 2015, compared to 58.7 percent in 2011, and 61.7 percent in 2006. Togo’s Human Development Index score for 2015 was 0.487, ranking the country 166 out of 188 countries. Neighbors Benin and Burkina Faso were ranked lower than Togo at 167 and 139 respectively. Ghana was ranked higher at 139.


U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report, trafficking risk may be found among children in export supply chains including the agricultural sector—particularly on coffee, cocoa, and cotton farms and in stone and sand quarries. Boys are vulnerable to trafficking in construction, salvage yards, the mining sector, and as mechanics.

Read the full TIP Report at: https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271299.htm

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

Togo has had a negative net migration since the early 1980s. International migrants made up less than four percent of the Togolese population in 2015. The largest source countries for migrants include Benin, Niger, Ghana, and Nigeria. There were an estimated 13,279 persons of concern in Togo at the end of 2016. There were an estimated 12,491 refugees and 783 asylum-seekers.
The most common destination countries for migrants from Togo are Nigeria, followed by Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and France.¹⁹

Exports and Trade

Togo’s top exports in 2016 include phosphates, plastics, cement, cotton, beauty products, mineral and aerated water, motorcycles, and gold.²⁰
The top importers of all goods from Togo include Benin, Lebanon, India, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and China. 21
Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers’ Rights

Freedom of Association

The law provides for the rights of workers (with exceptions for security forces, firefighters, and police officers) to form and organize unions. The law also protects workers’ right to bargain collectively and to
strike. However, healthcare workers can be ordered to return to work if the safety of the population is at risk. There are no explicit provisions prohibiting employers from retaliating against striking workers, but employers must receive authorization from the labor inspectorate before they fire workers and workers fired illegally must be reinstated. Workers in the country’s Export Processing Zone (EPZ) are allowed to form two unions. These workers are not legally protected from anti-union discrimination. According to the U.S. Department of State, the government has effectively enforced freedom of association laws, especially outside of the EPZ.\textsuperscript{22}

**Working Conditions**

The minimum wage was set at CFA 35,000 (USD 62) per month by a national collective bargaining agreement. The legal workweek for nonagricultural workers is 40 hours with at least one 24-hour rest period per week. Agricultural workers are not to work more than 2,400 hours per year, which comes to 46 hours per week. The law limits excessive overtime work and requires specific overtime compensation, which has rarely been respected in the private sector, according to the U.S. Department of State.\textsuperscript{23} The number of labor inspectors in the country has been judged to be insufficient, and penalties for violations of the labor law too low to be effective.\textsuperscript{24} Togo’s labor laws cover migrant workers, but they do not cover workers in the informal sector or in the country’s EPZ.\textsuperscript{25}

**Discrimination**

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, citizenship, national origin, political opinion, and language. Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or communicable disease status, including HIV/AIDS, is not prohibited. According to the U.S. Department of State, discrimination law is not effectively enforced and discrimination occurs in practice, especially in respect to gender.\textsuperscript{26}

**Forced Labor**

The law prohibits forced labor, but the U.S. Department of State reports that the government has not fully met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The country is reportedly making significant efforts to do so.

**Child Labor**

The law sets the legal minimum working age at 15. Children under 18 are prohibited from working at night and in hazardous work. However, there are exceptions for hazardous work for children ages 16 and 17. According to the U.S. Department of State, child labor laws have not been effectively enforced in practice and penalties for violations are not enough to deter violations; minimum age requirements have reportedly not been enforced in the informal sector.\textsuperscript{27} Education is compulsory until age 15.\textsuperscript{28}
Civil Society Organizations

The U.S. Department of State reports that domestic and international human rights groups “operated generally without government restriction” and that “government officials often cooperated” with NGOs, though they allegedly did not respond to recommendations. 29

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILO 29 Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 100 Equal Remuneration</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 111 Discrimination</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 138 Minimum Age</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO 97 Migration for Employment</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
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Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Togo scores an 83.9 in the 2017 Fragile States Index, placing it in the “Alert” Category, a slight improvement from the country’s score of 85.8 in 2016. For comparison, neighboring Ghana and Benin are only in the “Warning” Category with scores of 69.7 and 77.6 respectively. Burkina Faso to the north is in the “Alert” Category with a score of 88. 31

Togo’s percentile rank for political stability and absence of violence/terrorism was 40 on the World Bank’s 2015 Worldwide Governance Indicators report. 32
Level of Crime and Violence

According to the U.S. Department of State, the Togolese police often did not respond to incidences of societal violence.\textsuperscript{33} Togo is reportedly an ivory-trafficking hub, with ivory poached in other countries smuggled out of the Lomé port. Previous reporting has noted the presence of trafficking networks led by Chinese, Thai, North Korean, and Vietnamese nationals using illicit payments to corrupt political elites to move ivory from Africa to Asia.\textsuperscript{34} In a call to crack down on poaching and ivory smuggling, President Gnassingbé noted the links between ivory trafficking and human trafficking.\textsuperscript{35}

State Persecution

In the 1990s, members of Southern tribes experienced ethnic and political repression from Gnassingbé Eyadema’s Kabyé-dominated government. Between 300,000 and 350,000 Togolese fled to Benin and Ghana due to this state persecution, though most of them returned in 1997.\textsuperscript{36} The Kabyé ethnic group still dominates the government and the security services in the country, and the Éwé, Togo’s largest ethnic group, continue to be excluded from political positions. However, Freedom House reported that ethnic discrimination was not widely reported in 2015.\textsuperscript{37}

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Togo as a 32 out of 100, where 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean.” Togo is ranked 116 out of 176 on that index.\textsuperscript{38} The U.S. Department of State describes corruption among the country’s police force as “endemic” and report that officials engage in corrupt practices with impunity. Judicial corruption was also an issue in the country, and the judiciary was reportedly subject to undue influence and control from the executive branch. The Togolese National Assembly created the High Authority for the Prevention of and Fight against Corruption in August 2015, but no board members had been appointed at the end of 2016.\textsuperscript{39}

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Togo is ranked in the low human development category, according to the UN Human Development Index, with a rank of 166 out of 188 countries and a score of 0.487. Togo’s human development score is higher than its neighbors (and migrant sending countries), Burkina Faso and Benin, but lower than Ghana.\textsuperscript{40}
Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movement of Migrants

The U.S. Department of State did not report any policies that limited employment options for migrants or restricted migrants’ freedom of movement. Labor law, including wages and working conditions, applied to migrant workers.41

Level and Extent of Poverty

Togo has a relatively high level of poverty, with 48.5 percent of the population determined to be living in multi-dimensional poverty, according to the UN. When adjusted for inequality, the Human Development Index score falls to 0.332.42 Togo’s gross national income (GNI) per capita was USD 540 in 2016, USD 450 in 2010, USD 290 in 2000, and USD 400 in 1990.43

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Gender Equality Index gave Togo a score of 0.840 in 2015, up from 0.814 in 2010, and 0.770 in 2000.44

Gender equality in employment is prohibited by law. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, women experience discrimination in pay and pension benefits, especially in the informal sector and in rural areas. Formal law technically overrules traditional law in Togo, but many women in rural areas are still subject to traditional law. Traditional law allows a husband to control his wife’s freedom to work and her earnings. Women also experience discrimination in education and inheritance. There are no formal restrictions on women’s ability to sign contracts, open bank accounts, or own property in Togo.45 A 2013 amendment to the Electoral Code required party lists to have equal representation of women. Seventeen of the 91 National Assembly seats were held by women in 2015.46

Women represent over half of the agricultural labor force in Togo.47

Rape, including spousal rape, is criminalized in Togo. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, victims of rape rarely report the crime to authorities and when they do, authorities have generally failed to act. No official statistics are available, but observers have reported that rape is common and widespread in the country. Domestic violence is also a widespread problem in Togo, but there are no laws to address it. Sexual harassment is criminalized; however, there are no punishments prescribed by the law. According to the U.S. Department of State, authorities have not enforced the law and sexual harassment is a common problem.48

Landlessness and Dispossession

There are no reported IDPs or stateless persons in Togo, according to 2015 data from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).49 In their 2016/2017 annual report, Amnesty International reported protests against eviction due to phosphate extraction. The protesting communities were met with tear gas, batons, and live ammunition from security forces.50
According to the U.S. Department of State, non-Togolese or French citizens are not allowed to own property without permission from the Prime Minister. Property rights are reportedly inconsistently enforced and conflicts are common.  

Environmental Factors
Togo experiences periodic droughts, as well as deforestation from slash-and-burn agricultural practices.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Phosphates
Phosphates Overview
Togo has large phosphate reserves and phosphate is a critical exported good from Togo, but production has fallen from 5.4 million metric tons in 1997 to 900,000 million metric tons in 2013. Phosphate mining is controlled by large companies.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Phosphates
Evictions of local communities have been reported in association with mining development for phosphate production. Phosphate mining activities have reportedly led to soil degradation that poses challenges for food security to subsistence farmers living in mining regions.

Workers at a phosphate mine went on strike in 2016 to protest, in part, unsafe working conditions.

Cotton
Cotton Overview
Cotton is grown on small-holder farms in Togo with an average farm size of one hectare. More than 200,000 people work in cotton production, with up to 70 percent of the rural population engaging in the practice. Cotton production is overseen by the Nouvelle société cotonnière du Togo, of which the government is the majority owner.
Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Cotton

According to the U.S. Department of State, forced child labor occurs on cotton farms in Togo.⁶⁰

Coffee

Coffee Overview

Togo produces relatively small amounts of Robusta coffee, primarily from smallholder farms. Many coffee farmers also produce cocoa. There are an estimated 40,000 coffee farmers with an average of about .3 – 2 hectares each.⁶¹

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Coffee

According to the U.S. Department of State, forced child labor occurs on coffee farms in Togo.⁶²

Cocoa

Cocoa Overview

Cocoa production is limited in Togo. Cocoa and coffee are typically produced together on small farms.⁶³ Cocoa is produced mainly in the southwest region of the country.⁶⁴

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Cocoa

According to the U.S. Department of State, forced child labor occurs on cocoa farms in Togo.⁶⁵

Gold

Gold Overview

Gold accounts for over five percent of Togolese exports.⁶⁶ The vast majority of exported Togolese gold (73 percent) is destined for Switzerland, with the remaining share going to the United Arab Emirates (18 percent), and Lebanon (8.5 percent).⁶⁷ Importantly, Togo is not a major gold producing country. There are currently four companies operating under exploratory permits, but the only production that is currently underway in the country is small-scale.⁶⁸

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Gold

The majority of the gold that Togo exports is mined in neighboring Burkina Faso and smuggled across the border to take advantage of Togolese export rates.⁶⁹ Worst forms of child labor and trafficking have been reported in Burkinabe gold mines.⁷⁰
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Endnotes

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/TGO.pdf
http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview
20 International Trade Centre. List of products at 4 digits level exported by Togo in 2016. 2016. http://www.trademap.org/Product_SELProductCountry.aspx?nbp=1|768||||TOTAL|||4|1|1|1|1|1|1|1|1
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Trafficking Risk in Sub-Saharan African Supply Chains


