



Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Togo

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Head of state: **Faure Gnassingbé**

Head of government: **Kwesi Ahoomey-Zunu (replaced Gilbert Fossum Houngho in July)**

Demonstrations by political parties and students were dispersed by security forces using excessive force. Torture was used in order to extract confessions. Freedoms of expression, assembly and of the press were undermined by the authorities. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) published its first findings but by the end of the year no concrete measures had been taken to end impunity.

Background

Throughout the year, demonstrations in favour of political and economic changes were regularly organized, some of them resulting in clashes between protesters and security forces.

In January, the authorities tried to prevent publication of a report by the National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH). The report condemned torture by security forces and notably by the National Intelligence Agency against civilian and military personnel accused of plotting against the state, including Kpatcha Gnassingbé, half-brother of the President. Following national and international protests, the authorities accepted the findings of the CNDH and committed to implement its recommendations to fight against impunity. However, by the end of the year no concrete steps had been taken.

In May, the National Assembly adopted a law amending the Electoral Code. Several opposition parties accused the authorities of having "unilaterally" adopted the amendments and demanded their repeal. Changes were made to the legislation after protests, but some opposition parties still refused to restore dialogue and disagreed on the conditions for organizing legislative elections originally scheduled to be held before the end of 2012 and postponed until 2013.

Excessive use of force

The security forces regularly used excessive force to repress demonstrations organized by political parties.

- In June, the security forces hunted down protesters in private homes as well as in a place of worship. They also threw tear gas into a classroom at a school in the Catholic mission of Amoutiévé in Lomé, the capital.
- In July, police forces attacked the home of Jean-Pierre Fabre, Chairman of the National Alliance for Change (Alliance nationale pour le changement, ANC). They threw tear gas for several hours before entering by force to beat up those present and arrest some of them.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Torture in pre-trial detention was used to extract confessions or implicate defendants.

- In April, four students, including three members of the National Union of Togolese Pupils and Students, were ill-treated during their arrest and detention in the civil prison of Kara, approximately 430km north of Lomé. They had been charged with "incitement to rebellion" for organizing a meeting to discuss the government's promises to allocate scholarships. They were released without trial one month later.
- In August, Kossi Amétépé was arrested during an anti-government demonstration. He was beaten by members of the Rapid Intervention Force and detained in their camp in Lomé, where he was whipped with ropes and trampled upon.

Freedom of expression

The authorities curtailed freedom of expression and assembly by threatening human rights defenders and banning demonstrations. They claimed these measures were necessary to prevent risks to safety and to maintain public order.

- In February, Koffi Kounté, President of the CNDH, received threats from the entourage of the Head of State after he refused to endorse a report known to have been falsified by the government. Fearing reprisals, Koffi Kounté took refuge in France.
- In August, a citizenship education meeting organized by the Save Togo (CST) movement was banned in Kara. Leaders of the CST were assaulted and hunted down by security forces.

Security forces targeted journalists who were covering or filming anti-government marches.

- In October, Justin Anani, a journalist affiliated to the International Federation of Journalists, was attacked by security forces in Lomé while covering a protest march organized by the CST and other opposition groups.

Prison conditions

Conditions in many detention centres amounted to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment due to overcrowding and lack of access to health care. The situation reportedly led to a number of deaths, including at least 19 prisoners at Lomé civil prison.

- In May, Bertin Sama, charged with drug trafficking, died from a lung infection at Lomé civil prison. He had repeatedly sought care but was transferred to hospital only two days before he died.

Impunity

In April, the TJRC issued its first report after conducting interviews with victims and alleged perpetrators of political violence between 1958 and 2005. The President asked for forgiveness on behalf of the nation and the authorities committed to take appeasement actions and award compensation to victims. However, at the end of the year, no concrete action had been taken.

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