



Togo — Va-PoReg Country Report

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07/05/1884 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of Germany]: Togo became a German protectorate on 07/05/1884. While a protectorate in name it was de facto a colony.¹ LIED and V-Dem do not provide data for Togo for this period.

08/26/1914 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of Germany, Constitutional Monarchy]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by United Kingdom, Electoral Oligarchy and France, Electoral Democracy]: After the start of the First World War, both France and the United Kingdom invaded the country, forcing the colony to surrender on 08/26/1914. The two invading countries divided Togoland into two administrative zones.² Both LIED and V-Dem's PCLI consider Togo since 1916. For the given timeframe, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties are absent. According to LIED, no elections were held during this period. Since 1916, V-Dem's JCE is classified as absent, indicating no judicial oversight of the executive. Concurrently, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which can be cautiously interpreted as indicating an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

07/20/1922 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Electoral Democracy and France, Electoral Democracy]/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Electoral Democracy and United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Electoral Democracy]: The country became a protectorate as an International Mandate of the League of Nations. It remained separated in two parts, one being under the French the other under British rule.³ The British part of Togo voted to become part of Ghana in 1957. In French Togoland, Territorial Assembly elections were held in 1955. They were boycotted by one main party, the Committee of Togolese Unity (CUT).⁴ LIED considers that multiparty executive and legislative elections were absent until 1945. Thereafter, only multiparty legislative elections were held during this period. No executive elections were present. For 1922-1955, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is likewise classified by us as showing that political liberties are absent. We interpret PCLI's score for 1956 as political liberties not really being present. Until 1945, V-Dem's JCE is classified as absent, indicating no judicial oversight of the executive. Concurrently, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which can be cautiously interpreted as indicating an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. From 1946 onwards, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

08/30/1956 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]/Start Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]: On this date, French Togoland joined the French Union and was granted self-governance.⁵ In the same year, the French Togoland autonomy referendum was held, which approved Togo as an autonomous region within the French Union.⁶ On 09/12/1956 Nicolas Grunitzky was named prime minister, he was supported by France.⁷ In 1957 universal suffrage was introduced (LIED).⁸ Political liberties were absent according to LIED and not really present according to V-Dem's PCLI. Until 1959, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. Because the colonial hierarchy persisted intact, the French High Commissioner retained decree powers and veto over all local laws, and no sovereign authority truly shifted to Togolese hands, this transition represents

an elite-driven redesign of colonial institutions. The change was managed unilaterally by Paris and its appointed premier, not negotiated with domestic opposition nor imposed by external force. Therefore, it is coded as a voluntary exit, with a net liberalizing direction, reflecting the expansion of electoral inclusion through universal suffrage.

04/27/1960 End Indirect Rule Colonial Regime [of France, Liberal Democracy]/Start Electoral Autocracy [as independent country]: On this date, the country achieved complete independence in an agreement with France and the United Nations (Lansford 2021: 1660, Marshall 2018e). Nevertheless, the new government under Sylvanus Olympio began to suppress the opposition directly after elections had been held. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. According to LIED the elections were not competitive. Systematic irregularities in the elections are confirmed by not really cleanliness outcomes until 1962 (V-Dem CEI). In addition, the elections are somewhat free and fair up to 1960, before they are scored as ambiguous (V-Dem EF&FI). Pre-independence political leaders were arrested or decided to flee the country (Decalo 1976: 96, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 101). Since the country's independence no political liberties were given (LIED). V-Dem's PCLI affirms that they were not really present during this period. Polity5 doesn't contain data on Togo until 1960. From 1960 to 1963, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. Since 1960, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

01/13/1963 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: Tensions with Ghana prompted the military to urgently request increased funding from Olympio. When these requests were rejected, the military ousted his government and assassinated Olympio. The military coup was led by ex-Sergeant Gnassingbé Eyadema and other former French colonial army veterans who had not integrated into the new Togolese military. Although they initially appointed a civilian opposition leader, Nicolas Grunitzky, as president, ultimate political control remained in the hands of Eyadema and two other ex-sergeants (Decalo 1976: 97-99, Lansford 2012b: 1435, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 102).⁹ According to LIED, both executive and legislative elections were held, but they were not categorized as multiparty.. For the timeframe 1963-1966, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present. According to V-Dem's PCLI, political liberties were absent in 1967. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

04/14/1967 End Military Autocracy/Start Personalist Autocracy: On 01/13/1967 Eyadema and the military overthrew Grunitzky. Coup co-leader Kléber Dadjo, also a military officer, became chairman of the junta. On 04/14/1967 Gnassingbé Eyadema unilaterally dismissed Dadjo from his position of junta chairman and declared himself president. During his government, he banned in 1969 all parties except for his Rally of the Togolese People Party, which he had only founded in the same year. He held one-party and one-candidate elections. On 09/27/1992 a multiparty constitution was adopted by popular referendum (Lansford 2021: 1659).¹⁰ GWF and REIGN classify the whole period from 1967 to 1993 as a personalist autocracy, BR, AF, HTW, and MCM between 1972 and 1990 as a military autocracy. However, there are also very strong indicators in favor of placing this regime in the personalist category. The military represented almost no actual restriction on Eyadema's exercise of power. The regime was characterized by his personal authority and a lack of strong, organized political institutions. His personally founded party is an example of this. Another point in favor of this view is that the party was dissolved in 2012 after Eyadema's son took it over after his death in 2005.¹¹ The Rally of the Togolese People Party then emerged into the newly founded party Union for the Republic by his son 2012.¹² Furthermore, Eyadema's rule rested on repression, patronage, and a bizarre leadership cult. According to LIED, no multiparty executive or legislative elections were held until 1971.

Thereafter, only executive elections, which were not categorized as multiparty, were recorded. From 1979 onwards, both executive and legislative elections were included in the LIED database, but they were not categorized as multiparty. According to FH's classification for the assessed regime period, a score between 11 and 14 makes the country not free, which we also place in the not free category. For the period 1967-1990, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties are absent. For 1991-1993, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as being ambiguous about the status of political liberties. indicates in our interpretation an ambiguous state regarding political liberties. According to Polity5, until 1990, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. From 1992 onward, the executive experienced minimal limitations on decision-making, placing it in the first intermediate category. Until 1979, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are absent. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. From 1980 onwards, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent.

08/25/1993 End Personalist Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: The first presidential elections with more than one candidate were held on this date, but the opposition parties boycotted them, leaving only two minor candidates to run. They accumulated less than 4% of the votes, leaving Gnassingbé Eyadéma to stay president.¹³ His reelections in 1993, 1998 and 2003 were considered highly undemocratic and a seizure of power by the EU. Leading to the discontinuation of any talks between the two stakeholders.¹⁴ In the multiparty poll held on 02/06 and 20/1994, violence tainted the process, including attacks by RPT militants on opposition candidates. Despite this, international observers endorsed the results, which initially favored the opposition Patriotic Front (FP) with 43 seats and the RPT with 35 seats. However, following petitions from the RPT, the Supreme Court invalidated 3 opposition seats, putting the FP's lead at risk pending by-elections scheduled for May but later postponed. In the presidential election on 06/21/1998, President Eyadéma secured 52% of the vote, Gilchrist Olympio of the Union of Forces of Change (UFC) received 34%, and other candidates shared the remaining votes. Criticisms of the election process emerged from domestic and international observers (Lansford 2021: 1661). On 02/05/2005, Eyadema's death during medical evacuation led to the military's declaration of his son Faure as president, disregarding the constitutional line of succession. This was internationally condemned as a coup. After pressure, Faure resigned as speaker and acting president on 02/25/2005, succeeded by Abbas Bonfoh. In the controversial 04/24/2005 elections, Faure Gnassingbé was credited with 60% of the vote, but international observers deemed the elections fraudulent. In the legislative elections of 10/14/2007, the ruling RPT won 50 seats, followed by the UFC with 27 seats and the CAR with 4 seats. While foreign observers deemed the elections fair, the opposition contested the results (Lansford 2021: 1662). Ahead of the 2013 parliamentary elections, opposition groups protested an expanded Assembly and demonstrated for constitutional changes to prevent President Gnassingbé's third term. Despite this, Gnassingbé was re-elected for a third term on 04/25/2015, and a new government under Sélom Komi Klassou was formed. Gnassingbé won a fourth term on 02/22/2020, with 70.8% of the vote (Lansford 2021: 1663). On 04/29/24 Togo held parliamentary elections, in which the ruling Union for the Republic (UNIR) party won an extensive majority. Early in April a constitutional amendment shortened presidential terms to four instead of five years, with a two-term limit. Time in office was however not considered, allowing Gnassingbé to stay in office until 2033, provided a successful re-election in 2025.¹⁵ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since 1993, the country's elections are not competitive according to LIED. In addition, from 1994 to 1997 the elections scored not really clean levels. Between 1998 and 2007 it switched to no cleanliness at all. Since 2008, except for the year of 2014 with an ambiguous cleanliness, the scores maintained at the not really clean levels (V-Dem CEI). The overall election conditions remained ambiguous until 1997. Between 1998 and 2006 the elections are considered as not really free and fair. In the following three years the elections are somewhat free

and fair. Since 2010 they are classified as ambiguous (V-Dem EF&FI). As classified by FH for 1993-1998, the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free. Per FH's evaluation for 1999-2001, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. Per FH's evaluation of the years 2002-2006, the country scores between 11 and 14 as not free, which we also interpret as not free. As classified by FH for 2007-2012, the country scores between 9 and 10 as not free, which we interpret as rather not free. Per FH's scoring for 2013 to 2017, the country is classified as partly free with a score of 8, which we categorize as rather not free. According to FH, for the rest of the regime period under consideration, a score between 9 and 10 makes the country not free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather not free. For the period under consideration, LIED identifies political liberties as absent. For 1994 and 1995, V-Dem's PCLI indicates in our interpretation an ambiguous state regarding political liberties. For 1996-1998, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing somewhat political liberties. Our interpretation of the PCLI-data changes back to ambiguous in 1998, before returning again to somewhat political liberties for the years 2000 to 2010. According to our interpretation of V-Dem's PCLI, political liberties were present in 2011 and 2016. For the remaining years of this regime, we interpret the data of V-Dem's PCLI as political liberties being somewhat present. According to Polity5, from 1993 to 2009, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 1, between unlimited authority and slight limitations. From 2010 onward, the executive's authority was subject to minor institutional constraints during this time. Until 2004, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. From 2006 to 2017 and since 2020, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. In 2005 and 2018, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

05/03/2025 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Personalist Autocracy: On 05/03/2025, Togo shifted from an electoral autocracy under Faure Gnassingbé to a personalist autocracy. Constitutional reforms adopted on 05/06/2024 and entering into force on 05/03/2025 abolished presidential elections and established the new office of President of the Council of Ministers. Gnassingbé assumed this position without term limits, effectively removing even the façade of electoral legitimation. The reform dismantled the limited but still existing electoral framework and concentrated power indefinitely in the hands of a single ruler.¹⁶ The president is now indirectly elected by parliament rather than by direct popular vote. Moreover, while the presidency has become more ceremonial and less powerful, it retains the authority to appoint both the prime minister (President of the Council of Ministers) and the government.¹⁷ This transformation constitutes a clear regime change to a personalist autocracy. As per FH, Togo is considered partly free with a score of 9, which aligns with our rather not free category.

Personalist Autocracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Decalo 1990, Hounnikpo 2001)

Notes

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togoland>

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togoland>

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togoland>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1955_French_Togoland_Territorial_Assembly_election

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Togo/History>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1956_French_Togoland_autonomy_referendum

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_Grunitzky

- ⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Togo/History>
- ⁹ <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/togo.htm>
- ¹⁰ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Togo_2007?lang=en
- ¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rally_of_the_Togolese_People
- ¹² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_for_the_Republic_\(Togo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_for_the_Republic_(Togo))
- ¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993_Togolese_presidential_election
- ¹⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togo>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/togo-ruling-party-wins-sweeping-majority-legislative-poll-final-provisional-2024-05-04/>
- ¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Togo#2024_constitutional_reform
- ¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_Togolese_Republic

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