

Togo: Economic advancements amidst Gnassingbé's power consolidation | Credendo

Event:

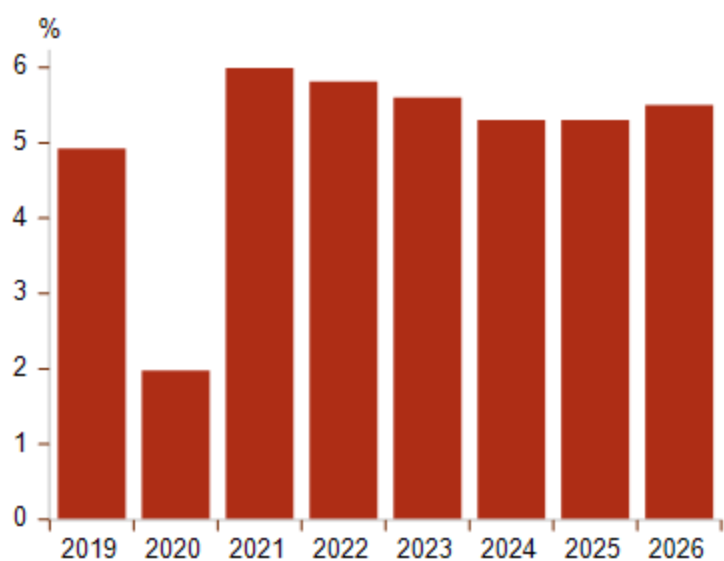
Over the past years, President Faure Gnassingbé has strengthened his hold on the country – including military and judicial power – by gradually dismantling Togo's democratic institutions. Despite fears over state oppression, the political opposition and civil society are trying to stand up against human rights violations and rising authoritarianism. However, anti-government protests during the last weekend of June were repressed fiercely by security forces and led to several deaths. Possible future rallies are likely to be met with severe repression while international pressure on the regime is expected to be limited.

Impact:

In May 2024 lawmakers in the National Assembly, dominated by the ruling Union pour la République (UNIR) party, adopted a constitutional change that eliminates citizens' right to vote directly for the presidency. The result has created an uncontested path for President Faure Gnassingbé to extend his 20-year hold on power – and the 58-year family dynasty – indefinitely. Early 2025, Savi de Tové was elected president but this will be a purely ceremonial role because Gnassingbé was elected 'President of the Council of Ministers' and holds all executive power. The opposition is fragmented as many key government critics and opposition figures are in state detention and political rallies have been banned in Togo since 2022. Due to fears over state oppression, civil uprisings comparable to the large 2005 or 2017–2018 anti-regime protests, have become less likely.

Despite political tensions, Togo's economic performance has been remarkably positive. GDP growth reached 5.3% in 2024 and is projected to balance around 5.5% over the medium term, driven mainly by infrastructure investments, port activity, consumer demand and the agricultural sector. Its trade balance relies mostly on remittances, gold and food exports, while manufactured goods make up for 36% of total goods exports, a high level compared to its regional peers. External debt ratios and debt service ratios are manageable and economic and financial risk indicators are relatively upbeat. Togo's reliance on financing from multilateral institutions (especially the IMF, World Bank, EU and African development Bank) has made the country a strong performer in terms of business environment reforms, tax system, internal audits, etc. Its compliance in terms of governance, business environment and public finance management goals has been strong and Togo's World Bank governance indicators have persistently strengthened between 2013 and 2023.

Togo: real GDP growth, % change



Source: IMF

Togo's strong commitment to reforms has kept multilaterals and other international partners on board despite the narrowing political space. Following the 2024 constitutional amendment, the UN, EU and African Union threatened to impose sanctions against the regime. However, the geopolitical shift towards a transactional world has diminished the likelihood of far-reaching isolation of the Togolese regime over undermining democratic principles and violating human rights.

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