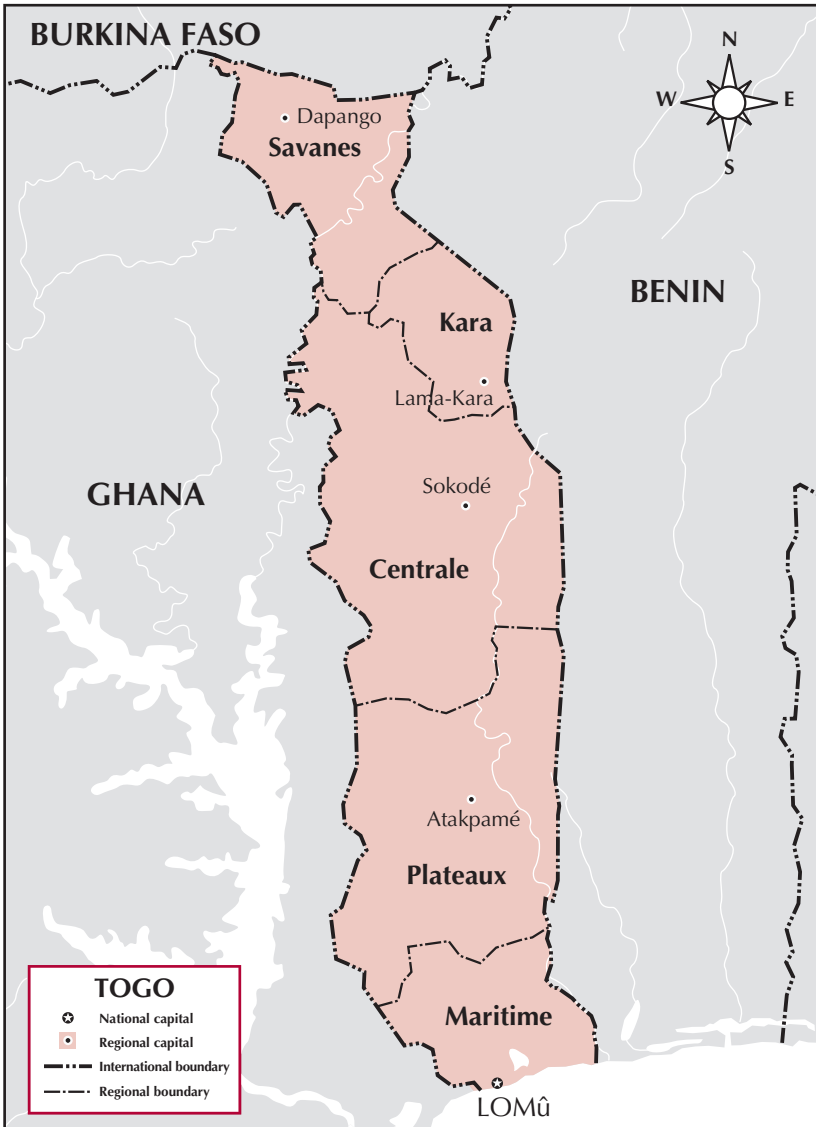


PART II



TOGO

OVERVIEW

Togolese President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who had been in power since his successful coup d'état in 1967, died on 5 February 2005, plunging the country into a succession crisis. The president's son, Faure Gnassingbé, immediately seized power with the help of the army and amended the constitution to allow him to rule until 2008.¹ Sustained international pressure, however, including by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), led Gnassingbé to hand power over to Abass Bonfoh, the vice-president of the national assembly. Fresh elections are scheduled for 24 April 2005.²

There are no reports of armed groups active or dormant in Togo. Yet, small arms are increasingly a problem. Between 1999 and 2004, the Togolese authorities seized 649,563 rounds of ammunition and 22,293 firearms—primarily imported and craft hunting rifles, but also 643 military assault rifles.³ The country is a vital transshipment route for illegal arms smuggling among Benin, Ghana,

Nigeria, and Côte d'Ivoire.⁴ Nigerian traffickers purchase craft weapons in Ghana and Benin and then smuggle them into Nigeria, while military weapons are usually confiscated from armed robbers operating in Togo itself.⁵ The country also has a growing craft small arms industry, particularly the Western region bordering Ghana (Badou, Bassar, Dagomba, Komkomba and Kpalime) but also in Notse in the South and Pagala in the North.⁶

OUTLOOK

Given the unpredictable political transition, the increasing availability of small arms in Togo is a worrying trend. Since 1993, when political parties other than the president's were permitted to contest legislative and presidential elections, armed violence reportedly has centered on the actions of state security forces. Opposition group activities were largely limited to peaceful protests and boycotts of elections widely believed to be fraudulent. Previous experience in Africa and elsewhere suggests, however, that where genuine political space is nonexistent, political struggle may turn violent.

PART II

The violent repression of opposition protests in Kpalime, Keve, Lome and Tabligbo in the run-up to the April 2005 elections⁷ underscores the challenges ahead. A deterioration of the political situation would likely generate spillover effects into neighbouring countries in the form of population displacement⁸ and accelerated weapons trafficking—but this time into Togo itself.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States

ENDNOTES

- 1 IRIN (2005a).
- 2 IRIN (2005a); WARN (2005).
- 3 Written correspondence with Colonel Assiah Toyi, President of the Togolese National Commission on Small Arms, 12 April 2005.
- 4 Ebo with Mazal (2003, p. 39). Written correspondence with Colonel Assiah Toyi, President of the Togolese National Commission on Small Arms, 12 April 2005.
- 5 Written correspondence with Colonel Assiah Toyi, President of the Togolese National Commission on Small Arms, 12 April 2005.
- 6 Ebo with Mazal (2003, p. 39).
- 7 IRIN (2005b).
- 8 Togo hosted 12,000 refugees at the end of 2003. The vast majority were Ghanaians that fled ethnic conflict in northern Ghana in 1994 (USCRI, 2005).

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