



Constitutional Coup in Togo

On March 25, at the initiative of President Faure Gnassingbé, the Togolese National Assembly voted in a new Constitution which establishes a parliamentary system, allowing deputies to elect the President of the Republic for a single six-year term, and a President of the Council of Ministers in whose hands the bulk of political power is concentrated, for a six-year term with no term limit.

Tournons La Page notes that this act undermines the foundations of democracy and violates the current Togolese Constitution, article 59 of which stipulates that the method of electing the President can only be changed by referendum. This solitary approach also violates the ECOWAS additional protocol on good governance, which stipulates in article 2 that no modification of the electoral law or the Constitution can be made without a large majority of the political players in the six months preceding the election.

Furthermore, TLP stresses that this decision risks deeply dividing the country and generating significant tensions in the short and medium term. The silence of the African Union and ECOWAS on this issue is worrying, as to ignore this political drift is to be complicit in the weakening of democracy not only in Togo, but throughout Africa.

For TLP, the adoption of this new Constitution would perpetuate bad practices in Africa, leading to numerous human rights violations. The demonstrations of 2017, which were violently repressed and led to the loss of human lives, bear witness to the Togolese people's determination to fight for democratic alternation.

In this context, Tournons La Page reaffirms its commitment to democracy and launches an urgent appeal to the Togolese authorities, partners and friends of Togo.

Tournons La Page is calling on:

A. Togolese authorities:

- To put an end to this initiative, which risks plunging Togo into uncertainty with serious consequences for the population and the country as a whole;
- To refrain from promulgating this new Constitution, which is already causing great tension and shows contempt for the Togolese people;
- To preserve the Constitution amended in 2019 limiting the number of mandates to 2 and electing the President of the Republic by direct universal suffrage for a 5-year term;
- To respect the electoral calendar in accordance with decree no. 2024-018/PR of February 23, 2024 issued by the President of the Republic, amending decree no. 2024-011/PR of February 08, 2024 on the opening and closing of the electoral campaign for the legislative and regional elections of 2024;

- To take appropriate measures to ensure non-violent and transparent voting in the forthcoming legislative and regional elections;
- Refrain from any illegal use of Togolese security forces, which would only aggravate an already volatile socio-political context;
- To lift bans on peaceful gatherings and meetings. The latter violate the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, ratified by Togo.

B. To Togo's partners and friends to:

- Mobilize alongside the Togolese people to block the way for the Togolese authorities, who have just embarked on a dead-end path of confiscating democracy, sanctioned by the ECOWAS Additional Protocol and the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance;
- Support pro-democracy actors and the Togolese people in their defense of the Constitution and their quest for a democratic Togolese society
- Dissuade the Togolese authorities from this unilateral and dangerous undertaking, which only serves to compromise the vital interests of the Togolese nation.