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## **Togo: Thorny transition and misguided aid at the roots of economic misery**

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Transformation in the Process of Globalisation**

***Togo: Failed transition and misguided aid at the roots of  
economic misery<sup>1</sup>***

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October 2007

**Abstract**

The holding of early parliamentary elections in Togo on October 14, 2007, most likely the first free and fair Togolese elections since decades, are considered internationally as a litmus test of despotic African regimes' propensity to change towards democratization and economic prosperity. Western donors took Togo as model to test their approach of political conditionality of aid, which had been emphasised as corner stone of the joint EU-Africa strategy. Recent empirical findings on the linkage between democratization and economic performance are challenged in this paper. It is open to question, whether Togo's expected economic consolidation and growth will be due to democratization of its institutions or to the improved external environment, notably the growing competition between global players for African natural resources.

**Key words:** democratization, governance, economic growth, development, LDCs, Africa

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## **Zusammenfassung**

### ***Togo: Fehlgeschlagene Wahlen und fehlgeleitete Entwicklungshilfe als Wurzeln der gegenwärtigen Wirtschaftsmisere***

Die anstehenden Parlamentswahlen in Togo am 14. Oktober 2007 sind wahrscheinlich die ersten freien und fairen Wahlen Togos seit Jahrzehnten. Sie werden international als Lackmустest für die politische und ökonomische Wandlungsfähigkeit despotischer Regime in Afrika gesehen. Die Ergebnisse neuerer empirischer Analysen über den Zusammenhang von Demokratisierung und Wirtschaftsentwicklung in afrikanischen LDCs werden in diesem Papier in Frage gestellt. Es ist fraglich, ob die erwartete positive Beeinflussung der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung eher durch Togos demokratischere Institutionen oder durch verbesserte externe Rahmenbedingungen, wie den zunehmenden Wettstreit der global players um Afrikas natürlichen Ressourcen bewirkt wird.

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## 1. Introduction

When the longest-serving African dictator, Togo's Gnassingbé Eyadéma, died unexpectedly in February 2005 after 38 years of autocratic rule, Togo became a test case for indigenous democratisation efforts of African states. However, it soon became clear that a change of regime through the ballot box was impossible, in view of the consolidation of this dictatorship, reinforced by decades of misrouted foreign assistance, as shown below. Political conflict flared up again. Eyadéma's son, Faure Gnassingbé, seized power in a coup with the backing of the army and the Barons of the ruling party RPT (*Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais; Rally of the Togolese People*). Violent protest at home and diplomatic pressure of major donors and African peers forced Gnassingbé to hold presidential elections in April 2005. But as the elections were rigged right from the beginning in order to preserve the power of the Gnassingbé-clan, it was no surprise that they confirmed the power of the incumbent as heir to the throne of his father.

In the interest of political stability in the sub-region, neighbouring states, France, the former colonial power, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) condoned the election results as well as gross violation of human rights, including the brutal political persecution of opponents. About 700 people died and some 40,000 fled to neighbouring Benin and Ghana in fear of reprisals. On the comfortable base of his usurped power, the president and his entourage reluctantly yielded to the request of the international donor community and the opposition for national reconciliation. The political accord between the government and major opposition parties in August 2006 was welcomed internationally as a major breakthrough in the aftermath of rigged presidential elections and subsequent political turmoil in 2005. The formation of a transitional government of national unity under Yawovi Agboyibo (16.09.06), renowned opposition leader, gave rise to optimistic forecasts concerning the preparations for early free and fair parliamentary elections in October 2007, which would be the first after decades of autocratic rule. This is also expected by many observers to bring to an end 15 years of economic hardship, caused by the political crisis and ruthless repression of political opponents as well as by international isolation of the country, including the disengagement by major donors in view of the 'democratization deficit' since 1993.

In the following sub-chapters I shall analyse the political background of these presidential elections in Togo, against the long history of political repression in this country, which was renowned up to the end of the 1980s for its prosperity, and often labelled the Swiss of Africa. A discussion of Togo's failed democratization and its impact on economic performance, including its aftermath for the poorest sections of the country will be followed by a summary of lessons learned. An outlook of the prospects for democratic renewal and economic consolidation, starting with the coming parliamentary elections of October 2007 will conclude the chapter.

## **2. Background**

The history of independent Togo is a show case of the unholy alliance of misguided post-colonial Africa policy and the quest of African autocrats for unlimited personal power. The murder of the first President of the newly independent Togo, Sylvanus Olympio, on January 13, 1963, by a group of Togolese veterans of the French colonial army, led by sergeant Etienne Gnassingbé (later called Eyadéma) and tolerated, if not instigated by the former French colonial power, opened up a Pandora's box (cf. Toulabor 1986; Decalo 1987; Cornevin 1988; Kohnert 2005). It was the first violent coup in the history of independent sub-Saharan Africa. Although unanimously condemned by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in the beginning, African statesmen soon turned back to normal. Military coups, often backed by Cold War politics of Western powers, became a familiar solution of political contest in Africa up to date. The autocratic rule of Eyadéma, formally installed in 1967, was supported by major donors because of its unwavering backing of Western positions in East-West cleavages, like the Hallstein Doctrine, meant to prevent international recognition of East Germany. Over decades Togo was put on the drip of development aid, which represented 40% to 82% of real GDI p.a.<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Worldbank: African Development Indicators 2004; WB, Washington/D.C., 2005:296. – The real Gross Domestic Income is in this case a better standard of comparison as the GDP, because it takes account income losses due to unfavourable development of terms of trade, too. – Compared with public revenue, excluding grants of other governments or international aid organisations, Official Development Aid (ODA) to Togo amounted to 62% between 1985 to 1992; in the following years (1993 to 2002) it decreased only slightly to 57% (World Bank: African Development Indicators, various years, Washington/DC: World Bank). Alone bilateral ODA of the Federal Republic of Germany (Western Germany) amounted to DM 600 Mio. between 1960 to 1989, supplemented by debt cancellation of DM 295.5 Mio. Even the disengagement of ODA starting from 1993, because of gross human rights violation

Although Togo was often labelled euphemistically up to the end of the 1980s the ‘Swiss of Africa’, Eyadéma’s, economic policy was neither development oriented nor aiming at pro-poor growth. Nevertheless, Togo gained relative prosperity up to the early 1980s because of its role as transit-economy for neighbouring countries. Not only for land-locked Sahel-countries like Burkina Faso or Niger, but also for Ghana, subdued by a severe economic crisis, and last but not least for Nigeria which followed an import-substitution policy. Therefore, the effective demand for consumer goods which could not be satisfied on the markets of Accra or Lagos, was redirected to the informal market networks at Lomé. The economic decline of the country, reinforced by growing political repression, started already about 1985 and continued up to date. Most Togolese citizens of today are poorer than twenty years ago (cf. WB 1996; Lejeal/Agbessi 2004:2332-36).

Eyadéma’s despotism was based on three pillars: First, an army (*Forces Armées Togolaises*, FAT), organized like a Praetorian guard, as well as security services and pro-Eyadéma militias, dominated by members of the ethnic group of the president (Kabiyè). In 1991, for the first time ever, detailed data on the army were published during the hearings of the National Conference. They show that officers and troops belonged overwhelmingly to the Kabiyè, six of the officers were even from Pya, the home village of Eyadéma (nearby the Provincial capital Kara, the headquarters of the Gnassingbé-clan), one of the reasons why the army was nicknamed in public as ‘army of cousins’ (cf. Toulabour 2005). The military was systematically upgraded with foreign assistance, notably of France, within the framework of secret pacts of mutual assistance. In the reconstruction period, following the murder of Sylvanus Olympio (1963-67), Togo’s military expenditure topped the list of all African states, and still in 1991 it counted – per capita - among the largest armies of the world. Ethnic instrumentalization of the army and security services and the militarisation of key-positions in the economy did not stop with mounting critic of international donors since 1993. Quite to the contrary, Eyadéma promoted again four ‘*nordistes*’ to the rank of brigadiers in 1998, other high ranking pro-Eyadéma officers were promoted to key positions in the administration, including parastatals. Nevertheless, the army was no homogenous block, as the social and political differentiation between rank and file, between ‘*nordistes*’ and

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and bad government of the Eyadéma Regime, was not as radical as might be supposed in view of official declarations on aid conditionality. Even Bonn, which increasingly fell apart with Paris over continuing aid to Lomé, paid between 1998 and 2003 between €8 and 10 Mio. of bilateral aid to Togo.

'*sudistes*' showed, which also explained their differentiated sympathy for the democratisation movement.

The second pillar was a centralized neo-patrimonial network of political and economic power, dominated by ethnicity and politics of xenophobia<sup>3</sup>, the third the instrumentalization of African occult belief systems for political means (cf. Kohnert 2005; Toulabor 1999; 1986; Ellis 1993). The latter was crucial, although much neglected in literature, and by no means restricted to the person of Eyadéma, nor to the ideological underpinning and legitimization of the worldly power of the head of state. Public hearings and testimonies during the National Conference of 1991 revealed the fabric of a well structured system of occult despotism, including political motivated witch-hunts and ritual murder, on nearly all levels of public administration from the top, down to the level of simple district heads (cf. Ellis 1993:472; Dovi 1992:14). It even did not stop short of accusing political dissidents from Eyadéma's own ethnic Kabiyè (Kabre) group or his own extended family<sup>4</sup>. The informal rule of traditional chiefs was adapted to the needs of despotism by the politics of 'authenticity', i.e. the reference to (re-invented) traditional rules, and by the forced 'alignment' of chiefs in the National Confederation of traditional rulers of Togo (*L'Union Nationale des Chefs Traditionnels du Togo*, UNCTT) created in August 1969 (cf. Decalo 1996). Thus, still in 1997 the official website of the Togolese government propagated a very special meaning of

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<sup>3</sup> An example of political instrumentalized xenophobia concerns the politics of '*Togolité*', as codified by the revision of the constitution of 2002. Thereby, exiled opponents and refugees were treated as 'foreigners', who could not any more qualify for public offices. Another example is the differentiation between 'authentic', 'original', or 'true' Togolese, propagated by government media vis à vis the so called 'Southern immigrants', i. e. the Ewé ethnic group, which immigrated centuries ago from neighbouring Ghana; many of its members belonged to the opposition, and were therefore labelled 'stateless vagabonds' or 'traitors' (cf. Toulabor 2003). Already in the 1970s the government in Lomé blamed the so-called 'Brazilians', i.e. Togolese of Latin American-African descent, notably the descendants of returned ex-slaves and slave dealers from Brazil, like the wealthy families of Da Zouza, Olympio or d'Almeida, and re-immigrants from Sierra Leone or Nigeria, like the Lawsons, living in Southern Togo, of preparing a coup (cf. Decalo 1996:50, 73-74).

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, there existed at least four Togolese concentration camps for political detainees, situated near Kazaboua, Agombio, Mandouri and Otadi in the northern parts of the country. Kazaboua, at the outskirts of the village of Kaza, about 12 km from Kazaboua, was notorious because of the imprisonment of so-called 'witches', where also political dissidents accused of occult practices, were imprisoned, tortured or murdered. It was constructed under dubious circumstances with assistance of a pioneer unit of the German army, under the cover of bilateral military co-operation and armament grant in the early 1980s (cf. Kohnert 1997: 43; Codjie, 1991).

A deep and rewarding insight into the occult aspects of informal politics in Africa, taking the (veiled) example of Eyadéma, offers the satiric novel of the late Ivorian writer Ahmadou Kourouma, (2003) „Waiting for wild beasts to vote”, (*En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*). Although presented in form of fiction, it is based on painstaking research of the author into the fabric of informal politics in Togo and other francophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa, putting the pertinent questions by means of an African praise singer (*griot*); cf. the detailed book reviews of this oeuvre by C. Toulabor and others,

African democracy: „*En démocratie africaine, tout est négociable, sauf le chef!*“ Autocratic rule was already formally legitimated by the introduction of a one-party state of the RPT in 1969, and ten years later consolidated by a redefinition of the constitution according to the requirements of one-party rule in 1979.

The ‘second wind of change’ in Africa strengthened political opposition in Togo which called for democratic transition. Following the example of neighbouring Benin, representatives of major politically relevant social groups instituted a Sovereign National Conference in Lomé in July 1991, thereby encouraging an heated public debate about the nature of the Eyadéma regime (cf. Seely 2005; Iwata 2000; Ellis 1993; Nwajiaku 1994; Heilbrunn 1993). It condemned the human rights violations of the Eyadéma regime and decided upon the repeal of much of the Presidents power, including the installation of a transitory government with Kokou Koffigoh, leader of the former Togolese Human Rights League (LTDH) as prime minister. A military coup of Eyadéma against the new transitional government (Dec. 3, 1991) and the brutal repression of anti-government demonstrations as well as political persecution of opponents in the following two years triggered a hitherto unknown wave of politically motivated migration of some 350.000 refugees to the neighbouring countries Benin and Ghana. Hideously rigged presidential elections in 1993 and 1998, as well as fraudulent parliamentary elections of 1994, 1999 and 2002, all strongly criticized by international election monitors, resulted in a consolidation of the power of the Eyadéma fiefdom. Since February 1993 all major donors suspended their aid programs with the Togolese government because of its gross human rights abuses. But then controversial discussions within the EU, notably the hardly veiled pro-Eyadéma stand of Paris, which wanted to safeguard its special relations with its former colony, prevented decisions in line with the positions of the German and British governments that pushed for more vigorous sanctions against Lomé, including a temporary removal of the EU’s preferential trade regime within the framework of the Lomé IV and Cotonou agreement (cf. CountryWatch 2002:17).



### **3. Run-up to the presidential election**

With the sudden death of president Eyadéma in February 2005, Togo became a test case for the viability of indigenous democratisation efforts of African states under the newly instituted NEPAD regime (New Partnership for Africa's Development; including its key element, the African Peer Review Mechanism, APRM) of the African Union, adopted in July 2001 (cf. Melber 2006a; Kanbur 2004; Abrahamsen 2004). However, the outcome of this test was rather disappointing. Although the longest-serving dictator of Africa had died, the despotic power structure of the Eyadéma-Gnassingbé clan, deeply engrained in the political and social fabric of the society, was very much alive, and it acted like feudal European king makers.

Immediately after the death of the head of state, borders and radio stations were closed down and demonstrations banned. Parliamentary President Fambaré Natchaba Ouattara, who hurried back from a visit to Paris to take over the interim presidency, as stipulated by the constitution, was barred to enter the country. Backed by the army, the undemocratically elected parliament, composed mainly of members of the ruling party (RPT), which held all but two of the parliamentary seats, deposed Natchaba. On February 6, 2005, it enthroned one of the sons of late Eyadéma, Faure Gnassingbé as his successor until the end of the mandate of the deceased in 2008, in blatant break of relevant provisions of the constitution. The designated heir of his father had been first elected into parliament in 2002. At that time he was put in charge of the strategic important portfolio of the Ministry of Equipment, Mines, Post and Telecommunications, which allowed him control of the phosphate mines, a major foreign exchange earner and a secret 'war chest' of the Eyadéma clan. Constitutional stipulations, demanding new elections within 60 days after the death of the president, were disregarded by the parliament as well under the pretext to prevent a political power vacuum. This flagrant violation of the constitution reminded of another 'constitutional coup' of the Eyadéma-Regime in December 2002, the first since the advent of 'democratic renewal' in Western Africa. At that time the three-quarter majority of the RPT in parliament had already voted for a change of the constitution in order to guarantee the continuity of the political power of the Eyadéma clan in three crucial domains. First, it changed article 59 of the constitution, which now allowed for a third term of office of the president. Second, it revised article 62, which in its new version reduced the minimum age of

presidential candidates from 45 to 35 years, to allow the candidature of Faure Gnassingbé, the young heir to the throne of his father. Third, it effectively excluded the major opposition candidate, Gilchrist Olympio, the charismatic leader of the major opposition party 'Union des Forces du Changement' (UFC) from the electoral process, by stipulating that a precondition for the candidacy would be at least one year residence in Togo before the elections. But Gilchrist Olympio, son of the murdered first Togolese head of state, Sylvanus Olympio, had been driven into political exile by various attempts on his life during previous electoral campaigns, notably in May 1992, when he was ambushed nearby Soudou in the North of the country, presumably by a military unit led by Ernest Gnassingbé, eldest son of Eyadéma. Whereas four of Olympio's entourage died, he himself could narrowly escape, seriously wounded over the Benin border.

At first, the opposition as well as African peers of the Togolese head of state were unanimous in rejecting this second 'constitutional coup' of the Gnassingbé-Regime. Violent civil unrest in Lomé and other provincial capitals was accompanied by threats with sanctions by the international donor community, the ECOWAS and the AU. Both organisations imposed sanctions on Togo. The AU chairman, the former Malian president Alpha Oumar Konaré, branded the new rulers in Lomé as a 'new type of mercenaries called constitutionalists' who would never consent in free elections if remaining in power. The then Nigerian head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo, even threatened with military intervention. On February 25, Faure Gnassingbé yielded under the combined pressure of internal and external opposition. He resigned as head of state, and the parliament designated one of the loyalists of the RPT, the deputy speaker of the parliament, Abass Bonfoh, as new interim president.

Although the illegal constitutional changes of February were revised, those of the constitutional coup of December 2002 remained, thus excluding again the major contender of the power base of the Gnassingbés. Early presidential elections were set for April 24. An extraordinary party congress of the RPT voted unanimously for Faure Gnassingbé as its leader and candidate for the upcoming presidential election. His major contender Olympio being barred from candidacy, the opposition was at pains to agree upon a new candidate. The six major opposition parties, disparagingly labelled 'radical opposition' by the ruling powers, agreed again on the 74 years old vice-president of the UFC, Emmanuel Bob Akintani as their common candidate for the presidential race, as

during the fraudulent 2003 presidential elections. Political repression and civil unrest, instigated mainly by newly created armed militia in favour of the ruling party, created a climate of countrywide despair and distrust. This was even deplored by the established Christian churches. Guided by Archbishop Philippe Fanoko Kpodzro, they demonstrated once more their engagement for peaceful conflict resolution, like in the violent transition period of the early 1990s. In a public march of priests in full ordination to the presidency they demanded to halt the violent conflicts which had already resulted in the loss of many lives. In addition they appealed to end the instrumentalization of ethnicity and xenophobia for political ends and demanded the rescheduling of the election, because major preconditions of free and fair elections (like security and the revision of the heavily biased electoral list) could not be guaranteed in the short pre-election period. The Togolese Bar Association and national as well as international human rights NGOs supported these demands. These fell however on deaf ears, both on the side of the government and the ECOWAS, which had offered to supervise the electoral process. In view of growing violent conflicts all over West Africa the latter was mainly interested in political stability. Robust guarantees for free and fair elections, as demanded by the opposition with reference to the broken promises of the past, including military safeguards for the protection of voters, provided by international security forces, were denied by the ECOWAS or other relevant international bodies. The interim government, which had demonstrated already its partial stand during the run-up to the elections, and its so-called 'independent' national electoral commission (CENI), were commissioned with the organisation of the elections, including the highly contested revision of the electoral roles. The leaders of the so-called 'radical opposition', Gilchrist Olympio (UFC), Yawovi Agboyibo (*Comité d'Action pour le Renouveau*, CAR), Léopold Gnininvi (*Convention des Peuples Africaines*, CDPA), Tchessa Abi (*Pacte Socialiste pour le Renouveau*, PSR), Nagandja Kampatib (*Développement Intégral*, ADDI) und Antoine Folly (*Union des Démocrates Socialistes du Togo*, UDS-Togo), were barred from participating in the election organisation by the interim government. They formed an electoral alliance and demanded (in-vain) from the government and the ECOWAS a postponement of the election date in order to create the preconditions for fair and free elections, notably an unbiased electoral role and viable election cards.

Three days before the polling day even Interior Minister François Boko from the northern Togo's Kabiyé ethnic group, a former ally of Eyadéma, pleaded without avail for a postponement. In view of the grossly flawed electoral preparations, including a highly contested electoral list, he recommended to appoint a prime minister of a transitional government which should rule the country for one to two years while a new constitution was drawn up. Otherwise Togo was heading for a "suicidal electoral process", given the high levels of pre-electoral bloody confrontations threatened to escalate into a veritable civil war. The reaction of the interim government was as rapid as predictable. Boko was deposed with immediate effect, and had to apply for political asylum with the German embassy in view of threats against his life. Shortly afterwards the German Cultural Institute in Lomé (Goethe-Institute) got torched by unknown forces as a kind of advance warning.

### 3.1 Political campaigning

Campaigning and the elections itself, which took place on April 24, 2005, were marred by blatant irregularities and excesses of violence, notably in urban centres and in the South, like stuffing of ballot boxes on a large scale, theft of ballot boxes in opposition headquarters by military personnel, and some 700 polling stations destroyed. Parallel structures of the opposition and civic rights groups, like the National Council for Election Supervision (CONEL), created already during the 2003 presidential elections to counteract electoral fraud on all levels of public vote counting, were obstructed or destroyed. Armed raids of the headquarters of the opposition, seizure of computers meant to collate and check the poll results, a nationwide shutting down of telecommunication and internet gateways, including obstruction of the phone, fax and mobile phone net during the decisive three days (including polling day), were accompanied by a biased pro-government media policy. On April 26 the supposedly Independent National Election Commission (CENI) announced the preliminary results and the victory of Faure Gnassingbé with doubtful 60% of votes. Thereupon, angry supporters of the opposition took to the streets and confronted the security forces and pro-government militia by acts of counter violence.

### 3.2 Election results

On June 3 the Constitutional Court in Lomé, dominated by Eyadéma-followers, which had already given their blessing for the doubtful constitutional revisions of the past and who were known for their biased statements from foregoing elections, confirmed the official election results reported by the CENI: they accorded 60,1% of votes for the incumbent, and 38,3% for the major opposition candidate Bob Akitani; the official acknowledged number of registered voters was 3,599,306, and voter turnout 2,288,279 or 63,6% (invalid votes: 88,005, cf. table 1). Just one day later Faure Gnassingbé was sworn in as new president. His occult initiation was effected secretly already before in Kara, the fief of the Gnassingbé family, to honour the tradition of occult politics of the father.

**Table 1:** Togo - Presidential elections of April 24, 2005  
(Official election results)

- Registered voters: 3,599.306
- Total number of votes: 2,288,279 (63,6%)
- Invalid votes: 88.005
- Valid votes: 2,200,274
  - *F. Gnassingbé (RPT): 1,325,622 (60,15%)*
  - *Bob-Akitani (UFC) 841,642 (38,25%)*
  - *N. Lawson (PRR) 1,04%*
  - *H. Olympio (RSDD) 0,55%*

Source. <http://africanelections.tripod.com/tg.html>; May 30, 2005

However, calculations of the opposition and of independent international NGOs, which had followed up the voting process by its own monitoring system, revealed a completely different result. According to extrapolations by the French NGO *Survie France*, the candidate Akitani won the election with 72%, against 26% for his adversary, even if one would consider only part of electoral cheating committed by pro-

Eyadéma forces. The ‘radical opposition’ protested in vain against the ‘stolen elections’, and Akitani declared himself the true president on April 27, 2005.

The ECOWAS, which nominated 120 of the total of 230 accredited election observers meant to supervise the elections, maintained the general creditability of the election results, although it admitted some abnormalities and incidences<sup>5</sup>, a position which was shared immediately by the French government. Whereas most of the election observers, who arrived the day before polling and left before the counting was finished, confirmed uncritically the validity of the count and the general credibility of the electoral process, diplomatic observers of the EU as well as international NGOs, like the *Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme* (FIDH), doubted the official results. A confidential report of four high ranking EU diplomats launched to the public on June 6, 2005 listed the following indicators of massive electoral fraud: inflated number of registered voters by 34% or 900,000 ghost voters on the ‘revised’ electoral list<sup>6</sup>, most of them in RPT strongholds, whereas the opposition complained that many of their members were denied registration<sup>7</sup>. Another creditability gap existed in the official statistics concerning the rate of electoral participation, reported with 80% to 90% in the (pro-Eyadéma) North, and 35% in the opposition strongholds.

### 3.3. Post-election issues

According to a report of the Togolese Human Rights Organisation ‘*Ligue Togolaise de Droit de l'Homme*’ (LTDH), published on May 13, excesses of violence since the passing of Eyadéma, notably during the electoral process, resulted in more than 800 death and 4,500 injured. Although the frontiers to the neighbouring Ghana and Benin remained closed from 22.4. to 6.5.2005, continuing political persecution triggered a mass exodus of political refugees. The UNHCR counted more than 34,000 refugees in Benin and Ghana until end of May 2005.

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<sup>5</sup> ECOWAS/CEDEAO: ‘Ce scrutin a globalement répondu aux critères et principes universellement admis en matière d’élections’, quoted in: ai (2005): Togo – Une élection à hauts risques. Amnesty international, Lomé, 20.05.05:4.

<sup>6</sup> The Demographer Thérèse Locoh, director of research of the I'INED (Paris), retained in an unpublished contribution "Démographie, démocratie au Togo", an even more blatant fraud of over 1,100,000 Phantom-voters ([http://www.survie-france.org/article.php?id\\_article=485](http://www.survie-france.org/article.php?id_article=485); 07.06.05).

Mediation efforts of the AU and ECOWAS to solve the post-election crisis by proposing a government of national unity started immediately after the elections. But they failed, due to the uncompromising attitude of Faure Gnassingbé, who acted from a position of strength and, although formally agreeing on limited power sharing, insisted on his newly gained legitimacy as elected head of state. AU president and Nigerian leader Olusegun Obasanjo, who brokered two meetings between Gnassingbé and his contender, Gilchrist Olympio, invited the bitterly divided parties to the Nigerian capital Abuja for reconciliation talks. But neither he nor the acting head of ECOWAS, Niger's president Mamadou Tandja, succeeded in resolving the dangerous stalemate between the political adversaries.

Instead, Gnassingbé continued successfully the policy of divide and rule of his father in splitting the opposition. He convinced the 67 year old ambitious veteran politician Edem Kodjo, former economist, founding member of the RPT and secretary general of the OAU, since the early 1990s leader of a small 'moderate' opposition party '*Convergence Patriotique Panafricaine*' (CPP), to act as Prime Minister of a new 30 member cabinet in May 2005. Thus Faure copied the same procedure which his father already had employed successfully in 1994, when Kodjo entered the government of the late Eyadéma as Prime Minister, sidelining his stronger rivals in the oppositions coalition against established parliamentary procedures, which reserved the seat of the Prime Minister for representatives of the largest opposition party.

However, the strategic posts in the new government, labelled government of 'national coalition', remained in the hands of relatives and hardline loyalists of the Gnassingbé clan. Kpatcha Gnassingbé, elder half-brother of the head of state, was appointed defence minister, assisted by his younger brother, Rock Gnassinbé, chief of an elite unit of the army. A close friend of the family, a Kabiyé from Kara as well, colonel Pitalouna-Ani Laokpessi, commander of the paramilitary gendarmerie in the 1990s, frequently accused by the opposition of torturing political prisoners, became Security Minister. Payadowa Boukpessi, former minister for Telecommunication in the Eyadéma government, also close to the Gnassingbés, was nominated Minister of Economy, Finance and Privatisation. Minister of Telecommunications became another friend of Faure, Koukouvi Dogbé, assisted by the young brother of the president, May

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<sup>7</sup> allAfrica.com: 'Togo – Diplomatic documents surface citing fraud in April poll', 6.6.2005; ufctogo.com: 'Présidentielle 2005 – les mécanismes de la fraude'. 5.5.05).

Gnassingbé (25 years), as deputy director general of *'Togotélécom'*. Apart from Zarifou Ayéva, leader of the small opposition party *'Parti pour la Démocratie et le Renouveau'* (PDR), who was rewarded with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, only four members of the opposition could be convinced to enter minor cabinet posts. Thus the government of stalwarts of the RPT and a handful of opposition defectors consolidated the power base of the Gnassingbé regime which continued to rule the country like its personal fiefdom to the detriment of national reconciliation. The scope of manoeuvre of Kodjo's cabinet became further restricted by an informal 'kitchen cabinet' of the president, composed of his defence minister and senior brother Kpatcha, labelled 'vice president' by the population, his cabinet director Pascal Bodjona, former leader of the militant pro-government student movement HACAME, later nominated ambassador in Washington by Eyadéma, and two powerful personal counsellors, Pitang Tchalla, former Minister of communication under Eyadéma, and the opaque French lawyer Charles Debbasch, searched by an international warrant of the French justice, who had already advised Eyadéma in the previous years in staging his constitutional coup.

Once the grip on power was assured, the government tried to come to terms with the opposition, as this was one of the preconditions of resuming EU aid, which insisted on the 22 commitments made by the Eyadéma government to the EU in April 2004, in order to promote democratisation. In July Gnassingbé and Olympio held talks under the auspices of the 'Sant'Egidio' Community in Rome and pledged to end violence, to secure the return of the refugees and to free political prisoners. A follow-up meeting was held in Rome in November to evaluate the implementation of the forgoing recommendations. One week later the head of state started a new phase of national dialogue, including representatives of the three major parties of the 'radical opposition' (UFC, CAR, PDR), to agree upon a framework for early local and parliamentary elections and a revised electoral code. Although the president showed formal signs of flexibility, e. g. in offering talks with or without external mediators at a place even outside of the country, sustainable reconciliation was unlikely in foreseeable future. Whereas the major opposition parties called for a repetition of the rigged presidential election as well as a return to the 1992 constitution and to the electoral code of 2000, the RPT majority in parliament persevered the amendments of the 2002 'constitutional coup' and of the code, as these favoured the ruling party, and of course both the government and the parliament underlined the legitimacy of the elected president.



The defence minister Kpatcha Gnassingbé started end of August to replace a number of army commanders, following recommendations of the ‘Sant’Egidio’ dialogue, which a. o. proposed to reorganise the military in order to render it more accountable. Whether these measures would enhance accountability was open to question, as he installed the key positions of the army, overwhelmingly composed of *Kabiyé* (about 7,000 of a total of 13,000), again with similar loyalists: the majority of the commanders of the operational units were born in Pya. This tradition was cherished with the nomination of Béréna Gnankoudè as chief of the general staff of the army, which commanded also elite corps directed by other brothers of the Gnassingbés. The brother in law of the president, Félix Abalo Kadanga, became commander of the Rapid Intervention Force (FIR); according to a confidential UN-report he was implied in several atrocities committed during the electoral process earlier in this year. The new commander of the presidential guard (RCGP, the renowned *Bérets verts*, i.e. ‘green berets’), Bali Wiyao, originated equally from Pya. The *Kabiyé* Lemou Tchalo replaced Ernest Gnassingbé, the eldest son of Eyadéma, retired because of chronic illness, as chief of the parachutist regiment (RPC, ‘red berets’) of Kara, notorious for its human rights violations in the past. Thus, the army, together with reinforced or newly formed paramilitary militias (originating mostly from student organisations like the HACAME) and private policing units and security firms (including the Security Advisory and Services, SAS-Togo, owned by the notorious French businessman and arms dealer Robert Montoya, former member of an anti-terrorist unit of the Elysée, Paris), both closely interwoven with the army structure, continued to be the major pillar of the power of the Gnassingbé clan.

Although civic unrest calmed down in the second half of the year, and 460 political prisoners were freed in early November, the political climate remained tense. Despite repeated assurances of the government that the refugees could return without being persecuted or victimized, the number of people fleeing Togo in the aftermath of election violence still increased up to August, when the UNHCR counted 24,500 refugees in Benin and 15,500 in Ghana, whereas the World Food Programme (WFP, Rome) called on 15.7. for urgent help for even 66,500 people forced from their homes, including 18,500 displaced, scattered over local host communities in Benin and Ghana and 10,000 internal refugees. The majority of refugees were young men from the south,

the region held to be the heartland of the opposition. While some of them went home during the following month, still more than 19,000 preferred to live in the refugee camps of Benin (10,960 in Come and Agame camps and 8,130 in Cotonou) at the end of the year, in fear of their safety at home. In the Ghanaian Krisan refugee camp conditions deteriorated because of seeming lack of protection against Togolese *agents-provocateurs* or spies, in view of the alleged ambiguous attitude of the Ghanaian security forces and of the government in Accra, accused of collaboration with Lomé. This caused nearly half of the population, about 800 refugees mostly from Togo, to leave the camp in November for Elubo, further west at the Ivorian border. Between 300 and 500 of these ‘double refugees’, including families with young children, hid in groups of 60 or 70 in the wild swamplands surrounding the Krishan camp still in December 2005 in fear of persecution.

Following up accusations of grave human rights violations in the aftermath of the *coup d'état* and the fraudulent electoral process, first made by the LTDH in collaboration with the ‘*Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme*’ (FIDH, Paris) in May, other international human rights bodies were at least as critical. Based on numerous eye-witness reports, collected in the refugee camps of Benin, *amnesty international* published in July 2005 a scathing critique of atrocities and impunity of their perpetrators, condoned by the new Gnassingbé regime in its report entitled ‘Togo – will history repeat itself?’, comparing the situation with the brutal repression during the presidential elections of 1998, and underlining the special responsibility of Paris, because of its long-standing ties of military aid and cooperation with Lomé. Following appeals of the AU and the international donor community the UN dispatched also a team of investigators to probe allegations of widespread killings, torture, abductions and political repression. In its report released in August 2005, the UN estimated that more than 400 people had been killed during the electoral violence, putting most of the blame on the security forces and pro-government militia, instigated by the military to act with utmost brutality against suspected opponents, providing state-owned vehicles for transport of armed militia, and cutting telephone lines, thus making it impossible for the victims to call for help. But also opposition activists were severely blamed for their ‘strategy of conquering power by deliberate violence disregarding the disastrous consequences’. The FIDH followed with an own report in November, deploring once again the impunity of perpetrators, the lack of human rights commitment of the new

regime in general and of the judicial system in particular. Apparently, the much awaited report of the 'independent' National Special Commission of Inquiry (CNSEI), set up in May as official Togolese response to the growing critique of the regime, chaired by former Prime Minister Joseph Koffigoh, did not come up to the expectations of the international community. Published in November after more than four-months long inquiry, it pretended that only 154 people were killed and 654 hurt, but it castigated the active complicity of the RPT with the perpetrators of excesses of violence and called on the government to charge and try the guilty; a list of suspects was handed over to the government.

In the following year resumed the inter-Togolese dialogue, sponsored by the EU to overcome the political crisis. The talks constituted one of the preconditions for continuing development cooperation with the EU and other major donors, suspended in 1993. Yawovi Agboyibo, leader of the opposition party 'Comité d'Action pour le Renouveau' (CAR), was on 22 April elected as chairman of the resumed dialogue, in which all major political parties as well as delegates from two women's organisations (traditionally in favour of Eyadéma) were meant to participate. However, two of the largest opposition parties, the 'Union des Forces du Changement' (UFC) led by Gilchrist Olympio and the 'Convention des Peuples Africaines' (CDPA), presided over by Léopold Gnininvi, boycotted the reopening of the dialogue because they had vainly demanded the presence of an impartial foreign mediator, as already conceded by the president in 2005. The major aim of the negotiations was the preparation for early legislative elections. To guarantee an impartial poll, additional items placed on the agenda were the revision of the electoral code, the voters' register and the constitution; the reorganisation of the independent electoral commission ('Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante' – CENI), the constitutional court and the army – all biased in favour of the ruling 'Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais' (RPT) party and the Gnassingbé clan; and last but not least, an end to impunity for perpetrators of violence and politically motivated killings.

The deadlock between the government and opposition was finally broken by the mediation of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso. After a ten-day meeting in Ouagadougou, all parties signed a comprehensive political agreement on 20 August 2006. This 'Ouagadougou accord' provided for a transitional government of national

unity and the organisation of early free and fair parliamentary elections by a truly independent CENI before October 2007, i.e., before the mandate of parliament, based on an undemocratic election in 2002 that had been boycotted by the opposition, ran out. It remained unclear, however, whether the agreement on credible legislative elections would also apply to the next presidential elections. This would have been of special importance to the UFC in view of another key part of the Ouagadougou accord, namely the abolition of the rigid residence requirement and of the exclusion of dual nationality for eligible candidates, imposed in the election law and the constitutional amendments of December 2002 in order to prevent the election of Gilchrist Olympio as president.

The deal opened the way for the formation of a new transitional government of national reconciliation headed by Yawovi Agboyibo, the veteran leader of CAR, the second largest opposition party. His nomination as prime minister by the head of state in September 2006 was strongly contested by the UFC, which believed it had the rightful claim to the post, being the largest opposition party. Again, Faure Gnassingbé had fallen back on the tactics of his father, who had split the opposition with a similar trick in 1994 when, in violation of the parliamentary rules, he had nominated Edem Kodjo, head of a minority opposition party, as prime minister, instead of Agboyibo, the leader of what was then the largest opposition party, CAR. Agboyibo now replaced Kodjo, who had been reappointed as head of the first nominal government of national unity (boycotted by the major opposition parties) in June 2005. The national press lauded Agboyibo's appointment as a positive measure to seal the Ouagadougou deal.

The new transitional government, nominated by the prime minister on 20 September 2006, comprised 39 members (five more than the old cabinet), with representatives of all major players in the Ouagadougou accord, apart from the UFC, which again refused to take part, although it participated in the new CENI set up in October. However, the most powerful portfolios remained in the hands of the RPT and the Gnassingbé clan. Kpatcha Gnassingbé, elder half-brother of the head of state and head of the militia that had contributed to the bloody conflicts of April 2005, was appointed defence minister. Col. Atcha Titikpina (RPT), former head of the presidential guard (the so-called 'Green Berets') and equally accused of masterminding the atrocities of April 2005, became minister of security. Payadowa BoukpeSSI (RPT) remained finance minister and Kokouvi Dogbé (RPT) minister of telecommunications.

The latter was of particular importance in the organisation and monitoring of the forthcoming elections, as shown by the crucial role of telecommunications in rigging the last presidential elections of 2005. To guard his rear, the head of state formed a sort of parallel cabinet directed by Pascal Bodjona (RPT), former Togolese ambassador in Washington. Other members were the former minister of security and RPT hardliner, Col. Pitalouna-Ani Laokpessi, who was compensated for the loss of his portfolio by his nomination on 16 December as special councillor for security at the presidency, where he rejoined other old hands like Edem Kodjo, nominated as minister of state at the presidency, and former minister of foreign affairs Kokou Tozoun, promoted to the post of rapporteur of CENI, a post of some strategic importance in view of the upcoming elections.

The most important, yet unresolved point of the Ouagadougou accord remained the reform of the army, at the heart of the empire around the Gnassingbé clan. In view of its clouded image, the army chief, General Zakary Nandja, on 28 August assured both the head of state and the international community that he backed the Ouagadougou accord and would abstain from interfering in the political arena. Nothing was less certain, however. Apparently, there was a fragile equilibrium between different factions within the Gnassingbé family and among competing clans in the army, all of them jealously guarding their prerogatives. It remained to be seen whether the head of state had sufficient authority and determination to effect the required changes. In April, the draft code of conduct for the armed forces and security services of West African states, a joint project of ECOWAS and the Centre for the Control of the Armed Forces in Geneva, was approved during a meeting in Lomé, serving as a reminder to the army about its supposed new role.

The human rights situation remained precarious. According to UNHCR, up till October 2006 less than half the 40,000 refugees who had fled the post-electoral violence and persecution in 2005 had voluntarily returned or been repatriated from neighbouring Benin and Ghana. A total of 16,500 remained in exile, fearing political reprisal. In spring 2006, the eastern and Volta regions of Ghana were 'invaded' by a second wave of migrants. Despite assurances from the Togolese government, several returning refugees had been arrested or harassed and were forced to flee a second time, now in the company of additional relatives. They remained in the transit and refugee camps of

Abotase, Digya and Manchere or scattered across 114 villages in the Volta region, where they faced acute shortages of food, water and shelter. In December 2006, the EU granted Togo € 14.6 m to assist in the strengthening of reception and reintegration facilities.

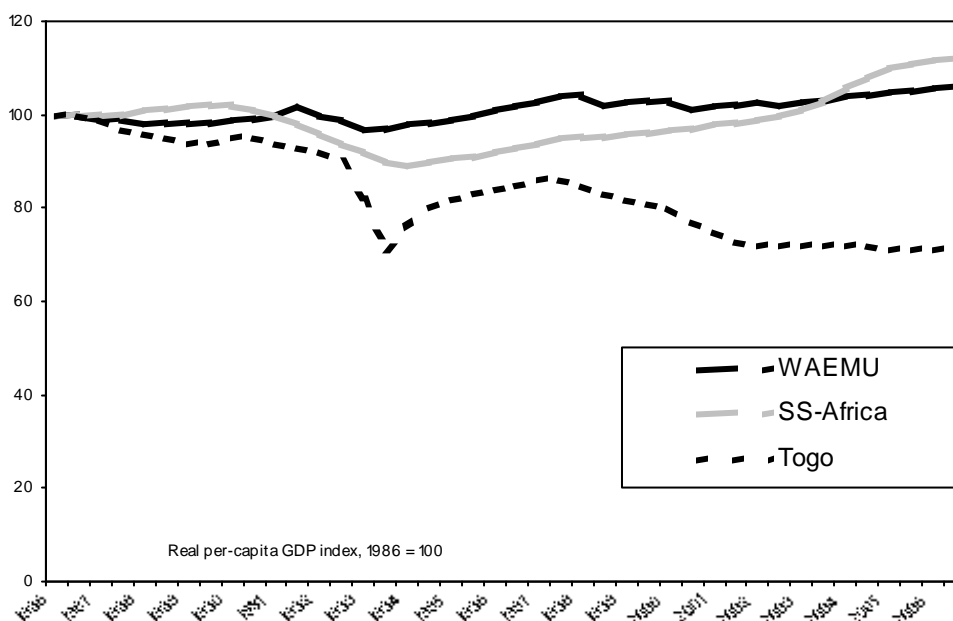
#### **4. Democratization and economic performance**

##### **4.1 Economic performance and general well-being**

Economic performance in the aftermath of the political unrest of 2005 was mixed due to counteracting factors, notably the volatility of Togo's economy to external shocks in general, and to the side effects of the continuing Ivorian crisis in particular. The tertiary sector grew by about 7%, probably a side effect of the trade diversion from Abidjan to the port of Lomé. However, in general economic growth still lagged behind regional averages, both of the UEMOA (WEAMU) and total Sub-Saharan Africa. On average real per capita GDP in Togo declined by almost 1% per year since 1990 (cf. Table 3, and IMF 2007:4). Its human development index worsened as well in the past decade. In 2005, the government failed again to meet major UEMOA convergence criteria, e.g. concerning public debt and the non-accumulation of debt arrears. In view of the continuing political crisis and the subsequent suspension of development cooperation of major donors, fundamental changes in the foreseeable future were unlikely. The remedy, i.e. access to the HIPIC initiative for heavily indebted poor countries, for which Togo would be eligible in principle, was linked with the fulfilment of the political conditions for aid, imposed by the EU and other donors.

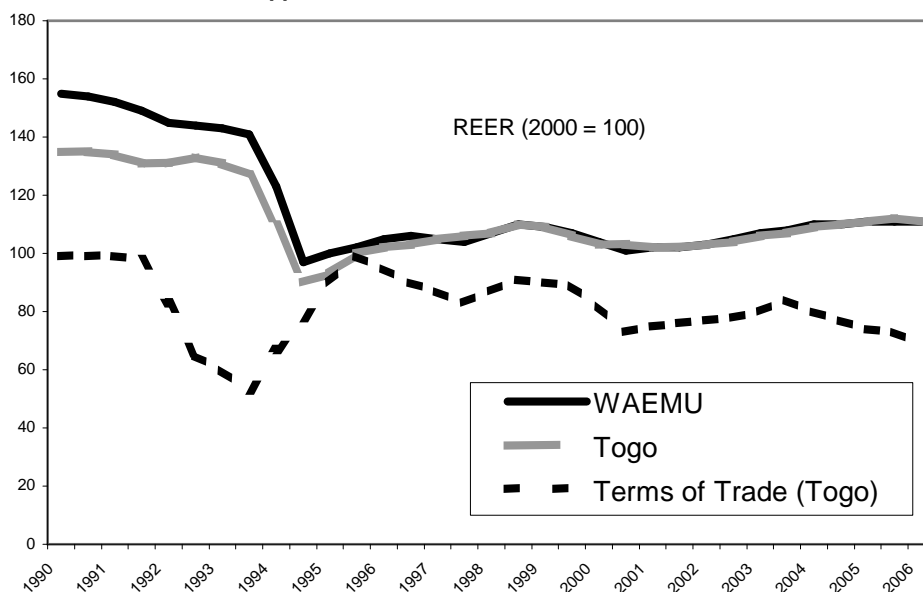
**Table 2 & 3: Togo's economic decline and export performance** (Source IMF 2007:4)

**Table 3: Economic growth has lagged regional averages.**



Sources: IMF 2007:4; national authorities and Fund staff estimates.

**Table 4: Export performance has been hampered by real effective exchange rate appreciation and terms of trade deterioration.**



Sources: IMF 2007:4; National authorities and Fund staff projections.

Export performance was generally hampered by a real effective exchange rate appreciation of the Franc CFA (pegged to the Euro), due to an overvaluation of the CFA *vis à vis* the US\$ of over 35% since 2000, as well as terms of trade deterioration (cf. Table 4, and IMF 2007:4). Provisions for the key foreign currency earning sectors deteriorated with a sharp decline in cotton and phosphate exports (up to -50% for cotton

and -21,5% for phosphate in the first 10 month of 2005). This was due to lack of incentives for cotton farmers caused by delays in payment during the past two seasons on the one hand, and the withdrawal of private management from the joint venture fertilizer production (IFG-Togo), linked to difference between the government and the foreign private managers on the misappropriation of funds two years ago, on the other.

In addition, the problem of unsustainable public debt, caused by corrupt and inefficient governance since decades, continued and was even aggravated by the cut off of donor support. Total public debt was almost 115% of GDP in 2005, a quarter of which was domestic (cf. IMF 2007:5). The state-owned banking sector suffered from the highest share of non-performing loans (NPLs) in the UEMOA, reflecting doubtful direct lending to the phosphate and cotton sector in the past (cf. IMF 2007:6). Public sector salary arrears persisted and, with it, strike threats by Togo's major labour union, the '*Intersyndical des Travailleurs de Togo*' (ISTT) during the whole year of 2006. To mitigate labour unrest, parliament adopted a new labour code in December. Its stipulations offered, at least formally, greater protection and better employment conditions, including a 40-hour week and equal pay for equal work. The stock of external debt increased to US\$ 1.8 bn at the end of 2006, overwhelmingly due to the accumulation of repayment arrears (some \$ 100 m).

In September 2005 Togo was rated as the seventh most strenuous nation of 155 countries worldwide to do business, according the "Doing Business in 2006" report of the World Bank. As in the case of five other members of UEMOA, which equally ranked at the bottom 11, its political and administrative operating environment constituted a barrier to the growth of private direct investment and private-sector activities. In a similar vain, Togo was for the first time ever included in the annual Corruption Perception Index of the international NGO Transparency International one year later, and being ranked the third most corrupt UEMOA state, at the bottom end (rank 130) of 163 countries worldwide.

Deteriorating public finance and wrong political priorities eroded the financial base of public health service and education even further (cf. IMF 2007:29). The decline of the education system had started already in the 1980s. Whereas Togo could boast of



the highest rate of primary school enrolment up to 1980 with 72%, things changed when the public sector stopped to guarantee the employment of the students after 1981. Enrolment went down to 52% in 1984 (cf. Lange 1987) and staggered around 60% in 1994 (cf. WB 1996). In addition there existed a significant and persistent gender difference.

The economic decline, mainly caused by severe and enduring governance problems, affected not only opponents of the regime but large segments of the population. Poverty has deepened in the past decades, both in depth and severity. It was most pronounced in the rural areas and in the Northern Regions, affecting over 70% of households in the Savanes and almost 60% in the Kara region (cf. WB 1996: ii). But growing pockets of extreme poverty exist in the urban areas as well, including Lomé. Although this was not peculiar to Togo but to be observed in other African LDCs too, there existed one vulnerable group specific to Togo: displaced families, including those forcibly evicted by the government for the purpose of the creation of national parks without compensation<sup>8</sup>, as well as for the exploitation of the phosphate mines (Vo district in the South), and victims of the civic unrest in the pre-election period of the 1993 presidential elections (cf. WB 1996).

For the dependents of the some 60,000 thousand political refugees, only reluctantly returning from neighbouring in 2006, i.e. the elderly, women and children left behind, life became even more difficult. Still five month after the violent electoral conflicts, many homes and property destroyed still lacked repair, there was no money to pay the school fees, and prices for maize, the major staple crops of the poor, rocketed in July because of lack of supply for local markets, apparently there was considerable trafficking of food stuffs to neighbouring drought-ridden Sahelian countries, but also to Ghana and Gabun, where wholesalers could earn larger profits.

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<sup>8</sup> e.g gross human rights violations during the imposition of the Kéran natural reserve in the North, as revealed during the National Conference of 1991 and condemned by different reports of amnesty international.

## 4.2 Limits and prospects for democratic consolidation

Although the political environment has improved since 2006 with the implementation of the national dialogue on reconciliation as required by the EU, the installation of an interim prime minister and a national unity government, and the preparing of free parliamentary elections on October 14, 2007, the perspectives of sustainable democratization are still rather bleak. Whether the established power elite will condone in handing over their cherished semi-feudal privileges to freely elected representatives of the people is doubtful. The international donor community will probably be satisfied with formal steps of democratisation, like transparent parliamentary elections, and resume aid. The increasing competition with new global players, notably China and other Asian powers, for Africa's natural resources, renders the insistence of Western donors on political conditions of aid, like 'good governance' and respect for basic human rights, increasingly illusory. Western donor countries and international aid agencies complaint about the negative impact of China's and India's mounting economic and political influence on Sub-Saharan Africa. It allegedly counteracted the Western donor's development orientated foreign and development policy by neo-mercantilist trade strategies, thereby displacing African local production and fostering other Dutch disease implications (cf. Zafar 2007; Umbach 2007:1; Broadman 2007). But Chinese aid and foreign trade policy only honoured established international norms of non-interference in internal politics. And with respect to development cooperation, Peking and Delhi rather promoted Smithsonian ethics, cherished over centuries by European (colonial) governments, i.e. the growth of the wealth of nations, notwithstanding the accumulation of wealth by governing elites to the detriment of the poor. Under these conditions, geo-political considerations and tactics of the Cold War area will be increasingly honoured even by the more critical EU members like Germany. In addition, the internal opposition is still divided, and the civil society weakened by decades of resistance to the oppression. The most important to the larger share of the population will be the improvement of their economic situation and of individual well-being.

In this respect the perspectives of the normal Togolese citizen are promising. Even small countries like Togo profited from the newly gained independence in

international relations, and increased bargaining power, provided by the quest of Asian super powers for African resources and emerging markets. Sub-Saharan Africa actually experience its longest growth phase for 35 years: On average, Africa will grow with about 6% in 2007, well above the long-term trend for the fifth consecutive year. This will have spread effects to Togo as well, independently of its advances in the democratization process, although Togo still drags behind with a moderate growth of estimated 2% in 2006. But broad money supply grew already by 22% in the same year, because of a surge in remittances and trade-related capital inflows, probably due to the improved political situation (cf. African Research Bulletin, May 16<sup>th</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup> 2007).

The growing competition between China and Western powers, all of them keen to enlarge their resource base in Africa, was also felt in relations with Togo, notably by the shuttle diplomacy of the head of state and the confirmation of strong ties of economic cooperation between Togo and China. Faure Gnassingbé visited Beijing in January 2006. He and Chinese President Hu Jintao vowed to enhance their long-standing bilateral ties in such fields as agriculture, trade, telecommunications and infrastructure. In April 2006, the new multimillion dollar presidential palace in Lomé, with over 40 offices and banqueting halls and already contracted and built by the Chinese under the late President Eyadéma, was inaugurated. The cordial relationship was confirmed by his son's attendance of the Beijing Sino-African summit on 3-5 November. On 22 July, Chinese Vice-President Zeng Qinghong signed a number of technical cooperation agreements in Kara, including grants and interest-free loans from the Chinese government for funding projects and a framework agreement on preferential loans for the realisation of the Adjarala hydro-electric project. During the China Business Days in Lomé in November, organised by the 'Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement' (BOAD) with the help of UEMOA and the BCEAO, BOAD signed two cooperation agreements, one on Chinese technical assistance with BOAD (approx. €1 m) and another for a credit line of €70 m between BOAD and the Chinese Exim Bank for development of infrastructure, exploitation of energy resources and construction projects in West Africa, including Togo. In August of the same year an Indian investment holding company signed an agreement with the government in Lomé for investments worth €40 m in the mining sector. In particular, this covered iron ore deposits at Bassar in the Kara region (estimated at 600 m tonnes), besides chromite ore (1 m tonnes) at Farendè (Kara) and Mont Ayito in Plateau region and manganese (13 m

tonnes) at Naéga (Savannes region). The agreement would also involve the construction of a 100 km railway and development of energy and water supplies.

Finally, the badly needed resumption of EU development aid alone would involve up to €60 m. The Ouagadougou accord of August 2006 triggered the clearance of €15 m of previously allocated Stabex funds, thus extending EU aid for the current year to over €36 m. A further €41.6 m was promised if a date for the legislative elections was fixed. But the EU reminded President Gnassingbé, that development cooperation would not be normalised without the establishment of a legitimate National Assembly. In November, the EU council of ministers dangled the clearance of €40 m of the 9th EDF as well as the inclusion of a further €110 m in the programming for the 10th EDF (2008-12). The resumption of EU aid was the more important, as it was considered as a precondition for continuation of IMF negotiations on poverty reduction and growth facilities, which, in turn, would allow for seeking debt relief with the Paris Club under the HIPC scheme and the new multilateral debt relief initiative.

## **5. Theoretical implications: *failed democratization is worse than no democratization***

According to recent literature on the linkage of democratization on growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, the emergent democratic institutions have had a negligible direct effect on economic growth<sup>9</sup>. The case study on Togo presented, would confirm this hypothesis at first sight. Yet, it will be challenged out of methodological reasons.

The holding of early parliamentary elections on October 14, 2007, probably the first free and fair elections in Togo since decades, are considered internationally as a litmus test of despotic African regimes propensity to change towards democratization. Since the early 1990s political development in Togo has been closely watched, not only by African peers and their regional organisations (ECOWAS and AU), but also by the international donor community, notably by the EU. The latter was deeply engaged in

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<sup>9</sup> For recent examples of studies on the linkage of democratization and economic development with an focus on Africa cf. Rodrik & Wacziarg 2005; Papaioannou 2005; Nel 2005, McKay et al 2004; Nulu & O'Connell 1999; Barro 1996

electoral assistance as well as in the observation of the past presidential elections, which nevertheless utterly failed to meet even the most basic requirements of multi party rule. The 22 democratic commitments made by the Togolese government to the EU within the framework of the Brussels accord of April 2004 formed the base of a lengthy and controversial process of national reconciliation which recommenced in April last year. Possibly because of its small size and lack of importance in international politics, Western donors took Togo as model to test their approach of political conditionality of aid, which had been emphasised as corner stone of the joint EU-Africa strategy adopted in December 2005 to ensure peace, security and good governance.

Without any doubt the economic and political sanctions imposed on Togo within the framework of aid conditionality since 1993, and that more consequently than in most other African states, were felt by the regime in Lomé and by the Togolese population. The economic decline within the past decade was last, but not least, due to the disengagement of major donors (cf. IMF 2007). Government and opposition alike repeatedly complained that the population was most likely to suffer under the cut off of donor support. Therefore, both requested the resumption of aid, although with different institutions, partners and methods (cf. Kohnert/Mönikes 1996). The opponents of the regime maintained that failed democratization, notably if punished with ill-applied aid conditionality, is worse than no democratization (cf. Kohnert 2005). Yet, the results of aid conditionality can not provide answers to the controversial discussion of the scholarly question on possible linkages between the form of government and economic growth.

In view of the relevance of informal politics and economies in West African countries in general, and in Togo in particular<sup>10</sup>, available data on economic development, income distribution or growth are highly unreliable. Therefore, systematic quantitative analyses of the linkage between democratization and economic performance or well-being of the people lack the required robust empirical data base to arrive at reliable results. In countries dominated by informal institutions, where more than half of economic activities are unrecorded (55% in the case of Togo), hidden by the

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<sup>10</sup> In the 1990s, the informal economic sector contributed on average 41% to the non-agricultural GDP in sub-Saharan Africa (Benin: 41% (1993); Ghana: 58% (1988); Togo: 55% (1995)), and 29% in Latin America, according to estimates of the ILO (ILO 2002:24). According to Chen et al (2004), about 72% of total employed outside the agricultural sector were employed in the informal sector in SSA (51% in Latin America).

shadow economy of the informal sector, the variance of many relevant variables due to (unknown) data errors can be – and most probably often is - more important than the variance due to the anticipated influence of other variables<sup>11</sup>. Heroic assumptions that the variance of the unrecorded data would be similar to that of registered data (and therefore negligible) is based on little evidence. Quite to the contrary, there are strong indicators that there exist significant, sometimes even antagonistic differences between the political and economic performance of actors involved in the informal sector, according their resource endowment and class position (cf. Kohnert 2007b). This applies even to the most basic economic data, like the per capita income.

As long as more reliable data on the informal sector are not available, research on these topics should focus on in-depth case-studies and holistic qualitative analyses with ‘thick description’ (C. Geertz) instead of sophisticated but unviable large-n econometric cross-country or panel analyses. Besides, one should take into account the age old controversial debate in economics, on the impact of political regimes and governance on economic growth, which is characterized by a deep divide between different schools of thought up to date. Correspondingly, differing results of analyses on the linkage between democratization and development in low income countries reflect in many cases rather the ideological stance of the author than the reality, notably if applied to African conditions.

Because of the high volatility of African LDCs to external shocks and the predominance of external political and economic conditions on domestic growth, a possible positive impact of democratization on economic prosperity may be overlaid or counteracted by a change in these external conditions. The doubtful reputation of Togo as ‘Switzerland of Africa’ under the dictatorship of Eyadéma mentioned above may serve as example.

In addition, one has to take due account of the possible trade off between general growth, accompanied by increased income inequality, and pro-poor growth. This trade off is likely to occur in cases of high power concentration, the hegemony of

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<sup>11</sup> Some authors tend to assume that informal social capital and formal organizations interact in ways that have rather positive outcomes, e.g. that innovative informal networks are the base for creating true democratic formal institutions of civil society (cf. Rose 1997, n. p; World Bank 2001:171). This might be true in some cases, but the opposite is true as well, informal networks can be anti democratic, insofar as they are used to corrupt formal institutions, the role of West African’s so-called ‘traditional’ secret

national power elites, and pronounced income inequality (cf. McKay et al 2004; Nel 2005). That is, it is likely to occur in Togo too, if not prevented by a rigorous supervision of a sustainable pro-poor policy within the framework of IMF sponsored PRSP-programmes (cf. IMF 2007). Finally, growth is not the only solution: In some African countries, notably in those with high inequality, like the former 'settler economies' of Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, even small changes in income distribution, enforceable politically without civic conflict, could have a significant larger poverty reducing impact than growth (cf. Bigsten/Shimeles (2007). Besides, it is likely to have positive effects on democratic transition. But the merits of democratization on growth (and vice versa) will be seen only in the long run (cf. Papaioannou & Siourounis 2005).

## **6. Conclusion**

In summary, the particular conditions of Togo's development over the past three decades do not confirm any close relationship between the form and methods of governance and the economic well-being of the people. Certainly, other things being equal, the repression by the corrupt Eyadéma-Regime has had strong negative effects on the majority of the opposition which suffered increasing hardship over decades, notably because of the enduring political crisis in the aftermath of the abortive democratic transition, initiated by the National Conference of 1991. To be clear about it, the Eyadéma-Regimes was never a development oriented dictatorship like that of Singapore or Uganda. The relative economic success of Togo in the 1970s and 1980s, was due to favourable external conditions, both in international politics (Cold War bias of development cooperation) and international economics (Togo's role as transit economy) as explained above. Even more than a decade of aid conditionality and disengagement of major donors (1993-2006), failed to bring the desired results. In view of Togo's hegemonic power structure, it mostly affected the opposition and the poorer sections of the population. Only if the international donor community is ready to learn from its past errors and willing to take responsibility for it, a sustainable democratic transition can

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societies like the Okija-cult of the Igbo, the Yoruba 'Ogboni Society' in Nigeria (cf. Kohnert 2007a), or the Mafia in Southern Italy or Russia are outstanding examples.

succeed. This requires first of all continuing close supervision of the process by the EU, i.e. substantial security, organizational and financial intervention for the support of the democratic forces of Togo to guarantee fair and free elections. Afterwards a long-term reconstruction assistance is indispensable.

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