

World
Watch
Research

Togo: Full Country Dossier

February 2023



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

February 2023

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Introduction

World Watch List 2023

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	96	94	94	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.7	92	91	92	92	91
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.9	89	88	87	85	86
4	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.7	12.2	89	88	88	87	86
5	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.1	16.3	9.1	88	91	92	90	87
6	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.6	14.8	14.4	16.7	88	87	85	80	80
7	Pakistan	13.4	13.8	14.8	14.8	12.9	16.7	86	87	88	88	87
8	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.8	15.8	16.5	10.7	86	85	86	85	85
9	Afghanistan	15.4	15.7	15.4	16.1	16.6	4.6	84	98	94	93	94
10	Sudan	14.1	14.2	14.9	14.9	15.5	9.4	83	79	79	85	87
11	India	12.3	13.1	13.0	14.8	13.3	15.7	82	82	83	83	83
12	Syria	13.2	14.1	13.6	14.1	14.1	11.3	80	78	81	82	82
13	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.9	15.8	16.7	2.4	80	81	78	79	77
14	Myanmar	12.5	11.6	13.9	13.9	12.9	15.4	80	79	74	73	71
15	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.8	16.0	16.4	0.2	77	77	77	78	78
16	China	12.9	10.0	12.7	14.5	15.6	11.1	77	76	74	70	65
17	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	10.3	15.1	15.0	76	70	67	66	68
18	Iraq	14.1	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	4.6	76	78	82	76	79
19	Algeria	14.1	14.1	11.5	13.7	15.1	4.8	73	71	70	73	70
20	Mauritania	14.5	14.2	13.3	14.1	14.2	1.3	72	70	71	68	67
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	13.9	12.7	15.6	1.5	71	71	71	73	74
22	Colombia	11.8	8.9	13.1	11.3	10.4	15.4	71	68	67	62	58
23	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.5	9.6	13.8	15.6	71	68	67	66	48
24	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	12.2	15.6	70	68	66	68	70
25	Vietnam	11.8	9.6	12.8	14.6	14.4	6.9	70	71	72	72	70
26	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	14.1	15.7	0.6	70	69	70	70	69
27	Cuba	13.1	8.3	13.1	13.2	14.9	7.0	70	66	62	52	49
28	Niger	9.4	9.5	14.5	7.7	13.1	15.4	70	68	62	60	52
29	Morocco	13.2	13.8	10.9	12.2	14.5	4.8	69	69	67	66	63
30	Bangladesh	12.6	10.7	12.8	11.3	10.6	10.7	69	68	67	63	58
31	Laos	11.7	10.2	13.3	14.2	14.0	5.0	68	69	71	72	71
32	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.6	68	65	63	43	43
33	Indonesia	11.3	12.0	11.6	11.1	9.2	12.8	68	68	63	60	65
34	Qatar	14.2	14.1	10.5	13.2	14.4	1.5	68	74	67	66	62
35	Egypt	12.7	13.5	11.6	12.1	10.8	7.0	68	71	75	76	76
36	Tunisia	12.0	12.8	10.4	12.0	13.5	6.5	67	66	67	64	63
37	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	13.0	15.6	67	66	64	56	55
38	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	11.0	10.5	13.9	67	65	64	60	61
39	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.4	12.1	10.6	66	66	65	63	65
40	Bhutan	13.2	12.3	11.6	13.9	14.2	1.1	66	67	64	61	64
41	Turkey	12.8	11.5	11.8	13.0	11.5	5.7	66	65	69	63	66
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	1.5	66	63	62	57	56
43	Malaysia	12.8	14.3	11.4	12.2	11.1	3.9	66	63	63	62	60
44	Tajikistan	13.8	12.2	12.3	12.8	13.4	1.1	66	65	66	65	65
45	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.9	65	65	64	60	54
46	Brunei	14.8	14.6	10.1	10.9	14.4	0.4	65	64	64	63	63
47	Oman	14.0	14.1	10.3	13.3	12.9	0.6	65	66	63	62	59
48	Kazakhstan	13.2	11.6	11.9	12.7	14.2	1.1	65	64	64	64	63
49	Jordan	13.0	14.0	10.5	12.3	12.7	2.0	65	66	64	64	65
50	Nicaragua	10.8	5.9	11.9	12.8	13.6	9.4	65	56	51	41	41

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
51	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.3	64	63	62	61	61
52	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	64	63	62	60
53	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.6	63	61	58	55	52
54	UAE	13.4	13.4	9.9	11.2	12.8	1.1	62	62	62	60	58
55	Nepal	12.0	9.8	9.4	13.0	12.6	4.4	61	64	66	64	64
56	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.3	0.6	60	59	56	56	56
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.3	9.7	10.3	12.0	2.0	60	59	58	60	57
58	Azerbaijan	13.2	10.0	9.5	12.0	13.6	0.6	59	60	56	57	57
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.2	11.0	10.4	12.0	2.0	59	58	58	57	56
60	Chad	11.6	8.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	7.6	58	55	53	56	48
61	Russian Federation	12.3	7.9	10.3	11.8	12.8	2.0	57	56	57	60	60
62	Sri Lanka	12.8	9.1	10.6	11.3	9.5	3.9	57	63	62	65	58
63	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	11.7	8.9	57	50	42	42	41
64	Venezuela	6.0	4.6	11.7	10.2	11.4	11.7	56	51	39	42	41
65	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	11.1	55	52	48	48	43
66	Bahrain	12.7	13.3	8.7	10.7	8.8	0.9	55	57	56	55	55
67	Honduras	7.1	5.0	11.9	7.6	9.8	11.9	53	48	46	39	38
68	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	7.2	52	51	46	43	42
69	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	9.2	14.8	51	48	47	48	47
70	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	11.0	5.4	49	44	43	41	42
71	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	3.0	48	43	47	45	46
72	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	7.6	15.0	46	43	43	44	44
73	El Salvador	7.7	4.2	10.6	7.4	9.1	6.7	46	45	42	38	30
74	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	3.3	44	42	42	42	43
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	1.1	44	44	43	43	43
76	Belarus	9.5	3.8	4.8	9.4	12.1	3.3	43	33	30	28	35

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Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the “Keys to Understanding” chapter under the heading “Links for general background information”. Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2023 reporting period was 1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

WWL 2023 Situation in brief / Togo

Brief country details

Togo: Population (UN estimate for 2022)	Christians	Chr%
8,681,000	4,163,000	48.0

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

Map of country



Togo: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	49	70
WWL 2022	44	71
WWL 2021	43	71
WWL 2020	41	73
WWL 2019	42	70

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Togo: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials
Islamic oppression	Non-Christian religious leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, One's own (extended) family
Organized corruption and crime	Organized crime cartels or networks
Clan oppression	Ethnic group leaders, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs

Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.

Brief description of the persecution situation

The challenges that Christians face in the country can be summarized as follows: i) Some government officials abuse their power and curtail the rights of Christians; ii) There are also problems that emanate from the followers of Voodoo and other African traditional belief systems (*Clan oppression*); iii) Evangelicals who evangelize among Muslims face significant difficulties and converts from Islam face serious opposition. iv) There are also criminal networks in the country that create another layer of persecution. In all four circumstances mentioned above, Christians face pressure in different forms.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- Christians are harassed in their community to abide by dress codes.
- Converts are forced to attend Voodoo ceremonies.
- Converts face expulsion from their homes.

Specific examples of positive developments

In a situation where persecution exists, it is always positive to see members of different religious groups attending each other's ceremonies.

WWL 2023: Keys to understanding / Togo

Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International 2021/22 country report – covering 154 countries	AI country report 2021/22 - pp.365-366	https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf	9 September 2022
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14106781	9 September 2022
Bertelsmann Transformation Index country report 2022 – covering 137 countries	BTI report 2022	https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/TGO	9 September 2022
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/togo/	9 September 2022
Crisis24 country report (Garda World) – covering 193 countries	Crisis24 country report	https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/togo	9 September 2022
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2021 – covering 167 countries	EIU 2021 - p.58	https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf	9 September 2022
FFP's Fragile States Index 2022	FSI 2022	https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/	9 September 2022
Freedom House's 2022 Democracy index – covering 29 countries (Togo not included)	Democracy Index 2022	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores	
Freedom House's 2022 Global Freedom index – covering 210 countries	Global Freedom Index 2022	https://freedomhouse.org/country/togo/freedom-world/2022	9 September 2022
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2022 report – covering 70 countries (Togo not included)	Freedom on the Net 2022	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores	
Human Rights Watch World Report 2022 (country chapter) – covering 100+ countries (Togo not included)	HRW 2022 country chapter	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022	
Internet World Stats 2022	IWS 2022	https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#tg	9 September 2022
RSF's 2022 World Press Freedom Index – covering 180 countries	World Press Freedom 2022	https://rsf.org/en/togo	9 September 2022
Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index – covering 180 countries	CPI 2022	https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/tgo	24 February 2023
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators (country profile) – covering 189 countries	HDI profile	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/TGO	9 September 2022
US State Department's 2021 International Religious Freedom (country profile)	IRFR 2021	https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/togo/	9 September 2022
USCIRF 2022 country reports – covering 15 CPC / 12 SWL (Togo not included)	USCIRF 2022	https://www.uscifr.gov/countries	
World Bank country overview – covering 178 countries	World Bank overview 2022	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/togo/overview	9 September 2022
World Bank country profile data – covering 222 countries	World Bank profile (2020 data)	https://data.worldbank.org/country/togo?view=chart	9 September 2022
World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 – covering 147 countries (divided per region)	Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 - Sub-Saharan Africa pp.88-89	https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2fefc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf	9 September 2022

Recent history

In 1885 Togo became a German colony. Germans lost Togoland to British and French forces in 1914. In 1922, the western part of the country was officially administered by Britain and the eastern part by France.

The country became an independent nation in 1960 with Sylvanus Olympio as the first president. However, the situation was unstable. In January 1963, Olympio was assassinated in the first successful military coup in post-WW2 Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1967, Gnassingbe Eyadema seized

power in a bloodless coup and ruled with an iron fist. When he died in 2005, his son, Faure Gnassingbe Eyadema, was appointed by the army to assume power. Although presidential elections were staged and won by Faure in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020, all were criticized for not being fair and free.

Political and legal landscape

Togo's political landscape revolves around the founders of the country. Two men, Gnassingbe Eyadema and his son Faure have dominated Togolese politics for most of Togo's existence as an independent state. Gnassingbe Eyadema became the President of Togo through a coup in 1963 and remained at the helm till he died in 2005. After seizing power, he turned Togo into a one-party state and continued without even a pretense of democracy until 1992. In 1991, he was forced to reintroduce multi-party elections, bowing to the prevailing international and regional trend of democratization. However, the democratic transition in Togo has proved to be very shallow and Gnassingbe Eyadema stayed in power by manipulating elections and severely restricting civil and political rights.

When Eyadema died after ruling Togo for almost four decades, his son Faure became president with the army's backing, in violation of the constitutional rules concerning succession to the presidency. Although Faure briefly stepped down from the presidency to placate the ire of the international community about his unconstitutional assumption of power, he was returned to the presidency in short order by holding presidential elections almost three years ahead of schedule. Faure has relaxed the iron grip of his father to some extent, but Togo still remains an autocracy. Thanks to constitutional amendments passed during his father's rule, Faure ran and won his third election in 2015. President Faure tried to soften the autocratic image of the system by forming a national unity government in 2010. However, the repressive and autocratic nature of the regime has continued, backed by the army which is dominated by Gnassingbe's Kabyé ethnic group.

Starting in August 2017, thousands of people took to the streets [demanding](#) that the president step aside in the biggest challenge to his family's power since the death of his father in 2005 (Al-Jazeera, 9 September 2017). Parliamentary elections on 20 December 2018 were [boycotted](#) by 14 opposition parties (The Economist, 5 January 2019). In February 2020, incumbent President Gnassingbe was declared victor in the country's presidential elections. The opposition candidate (Kodjo) and supporters claimed the election was rigged and a planned [protest march](#) was suppressed by security forces, with Kodjo and retired Archbishop Fanoko Kpodzro placed under house arrest (Crux, 4 March 2020).

Under the country's current law, Gnassingbe could remain in office until 2030. The Constitution of the country is not being respected as pointed out in Freedom House's Global Freedom Index 2022 report (A2): "The constitution calls for a bicameral legislature, but the Senate has never been established. Members of the current 91-seat National Assembly, which exercises all legislative powers, were elected for five-year terms through proportional representation in multimember districts."

For many years, there were no local elections. These were held in June 2019 (for the first time in 32 years), and the ruling Union pour la République (UNIR) won the majority of seats, securing

878 of the 1,490 seats. The Alliance Nationale pour le Changement won the second-highest number of seats (132), followed by the opposition coalition C14 (131 seats).

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by law. However, criticism of the government is often not tolerated and the authorities continued to restrict the right to freedom of expression. For example (AI country report 2021/2022):

- "On 27 August, Paul Missiagbeto, special adviser to government opponent and former presidential contender Agbéyom Messan Kodjo, was sentenced to 48 months in prison, 24 of which were suspended, by the Court of First Instance of Lomé, for 'death threats, insults against representatives of public authority, and dissemination of false news'".
- "On 11 December activist Fovi Katakou, a known government critic, was arrested and charged with 'incitement to revolt against the authority of the state'".

According to Freedom House's Global Freedom Index 2022:

- Togo is classified as a 'partly free' country with a score of 42 points.
- Religious freedom is constitutionally protected and generally respected in practice. Islam, Catholicism, and Protestant Christianity are recognized by the state; other groups must register as religious associations to receive similar benefits.
- While the constitution provides for freedom of assembly, several laws allow for its restriction. Police periodically use deadly violence to disperse assemblies in practice. A 2015 revision of the criminal code penalized participation in and organization of protests that had not gone through the necessary administrative procedures. In 2019, the parliament imposed new limits on the timing and location of public demonstrations and allowed authorities to restrict protests based on the availability of security personnel. During and after the 2020 presidential election campaign, authorities denied permits for several opposition rallies and civil society events protesting the flawed electoral proceedings. Demonstrators who attempted to assemble were dispersed by police, reportedly with excessive force.

Religious landscape

Togo: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christian	4,163,000	48.0
Muslim	1,609,000	18.5
Hindu	0	0.0
Buddhist	0	0.0
Ethno-religionist	2,841,000	32.7
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	43,100	0.5

Atheist	2,000	0.0
Agnostic	18,100	0.2
Other	4,100	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

Togo is one of the few African countries where traditional religious groups are still dominant in most parts of the country. However, the number of ethno-religionists has greatly decreased in the last years and many people combine traditional rites and customs with Christianity or Islam.

Christians live mainly in the south, while Muslims are predominately in the central and northern regions.

The law does not recognize specific religions, but the government in practice recognizes Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam with their religious holidays observed as national holidays and with religious leaders of these groups invited to government events. The law requires all other religious groups, including indigenous groups, to register as religious associations. Official recognition as a religious association provides these groups with the same rights as those afforded to the three recognized religions, including import duty exemptions for humanitarian and development projects. Registration is not obligatory, but unregistered groups do not receive import duty exemptions or additional government benefits such as government-provided teachers for private schools.

Economic landscape

According to World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 (for Sub-Saharan Africa):

- **Economic growth:** Togo experienced a robust economic growth prior to the COVID-19, but with only limited impacts on living standards and poverty. Growth averaged 5 percent between 2017-19 (2.4 percent in per capita terms), driven by private investment as the business climate improved. Prudent fiscal management underpinned growth and helped reduce debt vulnerabilities. However, growth did not translate into higher living standards, i.e. access to electricity and safe drinking water were 52.2 percent and 60.3 percent respectively in 2018/19, whereas in rural areas these were only 27.2 percent and 44.5 percent, respectively. COVID-19 disrupted growth, fiscal consolidation, and poverty reduction.
- **Inflation:** Despite the ongoing recovery, the Ukraine conflict could further increase food/fertilizer and energy price inflation and is a threat to poverty reduction and could lead to increased social tensions. According to a household survey realized by the National Statistics Office, over 30 percent of Togolese households were unable to access main staple foods when needed, with poor and rural households disproportionately affected (40 percent of the poor and 43 percent of the rural households). Heightened regional insecurity could trigger higher security spending and increase fragility in the north. Other risks include domestic debt vulnerabilities and weather shocks, which could negatively affect agricultural production.

- **Imports/Exports:** Increases in imports outpaced exports due to import growth from increasing domestic demand from infrastructure projects and increases in private consumption.
- **Poverty:** Poverty remains high and concentrated in rural areas. "The national poverty incidence was 45.5 percent in 2018-19 (749.6 CFAF/ day), while extreme poverty was 23.15 percent (US\$1.9 2011 PPP/day) in 2019. Poverty projections estimate that extreme poverty rate maintained at 23.2 percent between 2019 and 2020."
- **COVID-19 impact:** COVID-19 disrupted growth, fiscal consolidation, and poverty reduction. Structural reforms to improve infrastructure, notably in energy and telecommunications, governance and customs procedures would help Togo harness its potential as a transport and logistics hub.

According to the CIA Factbook:

- About 57.6% of the population in Togo lives in rural areas and agriculture is the mainstay of the Togolese industry, providing employment for around 60% of the labor force. Cotton, cocoa, coffee beans and peanuts are among the cash crops that are exported by Togo. In addition, Togo also produces marble and limestone.
- Besides agriculture, mining and construction are also important sectors of the Togolese economy. Togo has one of the largest phosphate reserves in the world and exports it to the international market. Besides its mineral and agricultural exports, the export of poached ivory from neighboring countries is also something that Togo is well known for. Armed criminal gangs kill elephants for tusks and rhino for their horns, before shipping them to Asia for use in ornaments and folk medicine.

According to Heritage Foundation's [2022 Index of Economic Freedom](#):

- Togo's economic freedom score is 57.2, making its economy the 104th freest in the 2022 Index. Togo is ranked 15th among 47 countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and its overall score is above the regional average but below the world average.

Social and cultural landscape

According to the CIA Factbook UNDP's HDI profile:

- **Main ethnic groups:** Adja-Ewe/Mina 42.4%, Kabye/Tem 25.9%, Para-Gourma/Akan 17.1%, Akposso/Akebu 4.1%, Ana-lfe 3.2%, other Togolese 1.7%, foreigners 5.2%, no response 4% (2013-14 est.)
- **Main languages:** French (official language of commerce), Dagomba, Ewe, Kabye, Mina
- **Urban population:** 43.4% of the total population (2021)
- **Rate of urbanization:** 3.6% annual rate of change (2020-2025 est.)
- **Population growth rate:** 2.51% (2021 est.)
- **Median age:** 20 years
- **Expected years of schooling:** 12.7 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (ages 15 and older):** 63.7%
- **Employment to population ratio (ages 15 and older):** 76.0%
- **Unemployment, total:** 2.0% of labor force

- **Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24):** 3.5%
- **Human Development Index (HDI) score and rank:** Togo is ranked 167th with a score of 0.515 points
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 61.0 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.822
- **Gender inequality index (GII):** 0.573

Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2022):

- **Internet usage:** 11.8 of the population – survey date: December 2021
- **Facebook usage:** 11.5% penetration rate – survey date: January 2022

According to the World Bank country profile:

- **Mobile phone subscriptions:** 77 per 100 people

As stated in a [World Bank Blog](#) dated 25 November 2020:

- "According to World Bank Group estimates, universal and affordable access to the Internet will increase GDP growth in Africa by 2 percentage points per year and would boost employment opportunities, regardless of education level, between 6.9% and 13%. In addition, the adoption and use of digital technologies would improve the efficiency and quality of public services and enhance transparency and accountability. Currently, however, the penetration rate of mobile broadband is 20%, placing Togo in 28th place in Sub-Saharan Africa, while 3G and 4G cover only 65% and 10% of the population, respectively. Moreover, the country is among the African countries where Internet connection is the most expensive. For example, the cost charged to Togolese cell phone users for data is twice as high as in countries such as Rwanda and three to seven times higher than in Tunisia, Morocco or Botswana."

Security situation

Although the country appears more or less stable at present, the fact that it shares a border with Burkina Faso means that there is a potential for Islamic militant attacks. The following two areas were also listed as being potentially dangerous by the [US State Department](#) Travel Advisory (25 July 2022):

- Areas north of Kande - due to possible Islamic militant violence.
- The cities of Sokodé, Bafilo and Mango - due to civil unrest.

It is known that al-Qaeda and Islamic State group affiliated groups operating in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali have been trying to advance to the Gulf of Guinea. They are seeking to gain access to the coast by advancing to Ivory Coast, Benin and Togo, which border the Gulf of Guinea. In June 2022, Togo declared a state of emergency in its northernmost Savanes region on the border with Burkina Faso due to security issues. The move was taken due to a recent increase in jihadist attacks in Savanes and aims to manage and accelerate military operations in the region more effectively. Eight soldiers were killed in a jihadist attack on Togo's border with Burkina Faso in

[May 2022](#). (VOA, 3 June 2022).

Since violent Islamic militants are known to target Christians in particular, the Christian population in the north of Kande is especially vulnerable.

Trends analysis

Political stability depends on the success of reforms

Faure Gnassingbé assumed the position of president in 2005 when his father died in office, who had ruled the country since 1967. He has introduced some economic reforms in a bid to quell public discontent. However, unless he can complement his economic reform policy with political reforms, political stability in the country is at risk in the long-term. In 2017 and 2018 demonstrations were held demanding reforms and at times protestors were killed. [In May 2019](#), parliament enacted a law allowing the incumbent president to potentially stay in power until 2030, extending his family's rule to 63 years (Reuters, 9 May 2019). In February 2020, he won re-election amid accusations of fraud from the opposition. This one-family presidency could lead the country into a political and economic crisis - especially post-COVID-19.

Since the country borders Burkina Faso where violent Islamic militants are known to be active, any crisis in the country could expose its population (particularly Christians) to jihadist attacks. This is why [Togolese troops](#) are currently heavily present along the border with Burkina Faso (The Defense Post, 21 May 2020). Indeed, in November 2022, Burkina Faso [officially authorized](#) Togo forces to advance into its territory to combat the jihadist threat (Africa Intelligence, 16 November 2022).

External Links - Keys to understanding

- Political and legal landscape: demanding - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/urges-togo-respond-protesters-expectations-170909053453123.html?xif=>
- Political and legal landscape: boycotted - <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2019/01/05/togos-president-suffers-an-electoral-setback>
- Political and legal landscape: protest march - <https://cruknow.com/church-in-africa/2020/03/togos-president-re-elected-according-to-official-final-results/>
- Economic landscape: 2022 Index of Economic Freedom - <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/togo?version=1132>
- Technological landscape: World Bank Blog - <https://blogs.worldbank.org/african/togo-could-more-digitalization-be-solution>
- Security situation: US State Department - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/togo-travel-advisory.html>
- Security situation: May 2022 - <https://www.voanews.com/a/al-qaida-affiliate-claims-may-attack-in-togo-/6602469.html>
- Trends analysis: In May 2019 - <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-togo-politics-idUKKN1SF1PX>
- Trends analysis: Togolese troops - <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2020/05/21/togo-jihadist-war/>
- Trends analysis: officially authorized - <https://www.africaintelligence.com/west-africa/2022/11/16/burkina-lets-togo-advance-across-border-in-anti-islamist-militant-fight,109865218-art>

WWL 2023: Church information / Togo

Christian origins

The Portuguese were present in the coastal area of Togo from the 16th century onwards, but there was no real attempt at introducing Christianity until German mission work began around 1847. In 1871, the Roman Catholic Church established its first mission station in the country. In 1886, the Society of African Missions was established. From 1884/5 until 1918, German Catholic priests were particularly active. Following the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the German presence was expelled. Churches from the USA first entered the country with the arrival of the Assemblies of God in 1937.

Church spectrum today

Togo: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	0	0.0
Catholic	2,367,000	56.9
Protestant	1,139,000	27.4
Independent	277,000	6.7
Unaffiliated	450,000	10.8
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-69,400	-1.7
Total	4,163,600	100.0
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	614,000	14.7
Renewalist movement	1,026,000	24.6

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

Orthodox: Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox. **Roman Catholics:** All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. **Protestants:** Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world's 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics. **Independents:** Christians who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant). **Unaffiliated Christians:** Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches. **Doubly-affiliated Christians:** Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once. **Evangelical movement:** Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls. **Renewalist movement:** Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest church denomination. Protestant groups include Methodists, Lutherans, Assemblies of God and Seventh-day Adventist. In terms of geography, Christians are mainly to be found in the southern part of the country, while Muslims dominate the central and the northern parts of the country.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

The northern part of the country and areas where Voodoo is very prominent are the main hotspots.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians: The many foreign Christians in the country are not isolated and can worship side by side with other Christian communities. They are therefore not scored as a separate category in WWL analysis.

Historical Christian communities: The dominant historical Christian groups (such as the Roman Catholic churches) do not face any major problems compared to other Christian groups in the country.

Converts: These are converts from Islam or traditional African religions (ATR). Converts from Islam face the most severe persecution in Togo and are forced to practice their Christian faith in secret.

Non-traditional Christian communities: The Christians in this category - who often belong to Pentecostal groups - tend to be active in outreach and evangelism and often face more difficulties than Christians belonging to the historical churches.

WWL 2023: Persecution Dynamics / Togo

Reporting period

1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022

Position on the World Watch List

Togo: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	49	70
WWL 2022	44	71
WWL 2021	43	71
WWL 2020	41	73
WWL 2019	42	70

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods

The significant rise in overall score was mainly due to the violence score increasing by three points. Average pressure also increased slightly. *Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)*: The challenges that Christians face in the country are mainly the result of government officials abusing their power and curtailing the rights of Christians. However, there are also challenges posed by the fact that the effects of *Islamic oppression (Medium)* and *Clan oppression (Medium)* are becoming more visible: Especially converts from Islam and Evangelicals, who evangelize among Muslims, have been facing hostility. However, what is particularly worrying, is that Togo looks likely to become a target country for jihadist expansion both in terms of ideology and operation. *Organized corruption and crime (Medium)*: Corruption exists both within the state structure and

in society. The Eyadema family has been ruling the country for more than five decades and has been accused of being involved in multiple illegal activities.

Persecution engines

Togo: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Medium
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Medium

The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.

Islamic oppression (Medium)

This Persecution engine is common in the northern part of the country where the Muslim population is dominant. Christians living in these areas face various forms of discrimination and obstruction in their daily lives. The most severe form of persecution affects converts from Islam. Muslims who convert to Christianity usually try to keep this decision a secret; they also worship in secret and cannot openly profess their faith for fear of stigmatization and persecution. If their conversion is discovered, they are often expelled from their families and communities. Christians do not feel safe as there are radical Islamic groups operating close-by in the wider West African region.

Clan oppression (Medium)

Over 30% of Togolese practice a form of ancestral worship often called Voodoo and is associated with tribal animism and is most common in the eastern and southern regions of the country. Voodoo is a West African traditional religion found in Togo, Benin, and Ghana. The dominance of Voodoo as a religion has greatly decreased through time. However, many Christians and Muslims mix Voodoo traditions with their understanding of Christianity or Islam. Traditional ethnic leaders oppose both conversions to Christianity and any Christian groups who are not prepared to mix ethnic practices with their Christian faith.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

It is reported that President Gnassingbe Eyadema killed more than 15,000 people during his dictatorship. His son, Faure Gnassingbe, succeeded him as president immediately after his death in 2005. Faure's regime has been accused of being dictatorial and corrupt by a range of national and international organizations. The country has held a series of rigged elections since 2005 in which Faure won each with an absolute majority. Moreover, the Faure regime has been accused of multiple unlawful arrests and the persecution of opposition groups. It was reported that in the presidential elections that were held on 22 February 2020 President Faure Gnassingbe of the UPR won his reelection bid by garnering 71% of the vote in the first round. The opposition claimed fraud and protested against the result. In such a governance system that is not free and undemocratic, it is often difficult or even impossible for Christians to get their rights respected or protected.

Organized corruption and crime (Medium)

Togo ranked 130 out of 180 countries, according to Transparency International (CPI 2022). Corruption exists both within the state structure and in society. The Eyadema family has been ruling the country for more than five decades and has been accused of being involved in multiple illegal activities. This organized system of corruption plays a role when it comes to freedom of religion be it in the court system or other forms of dispute resolution. This has caused difficulties for Christians in many ways.

Drivers of persecution

Togo: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	MEDIUM			MEDIUM	WEAK			MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Government officials								Medium	
Ethnic group leaders				Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Medium								
Religious leaders of other churches					Weak				
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium			Medium					
One's own (extended) family	Medium								
Organized crime cartels or networks									Medium

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "." denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

Drivers of Islamic oppression

- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Medium):** Some Islamic teachers (including imams and sheiks) are teaching anti-Christian sentiment. This has resulted in discrimination, harassment and obstruction of daily Christian life.
- **Family (Medium):** Extended family members have been the source of persecution for converts with a Muslim background, especially in the Muslim-dominated parts of the country.
- **Citizens (Medium):** At the community level, ordinary citizens and mobs also target Christians, particularly in Muslim-dominated areas.

Drivers of Clan oppression

- **Ethnic group leaders (Medium):** These groups are responsible for the persecution of Christians who oppose various traditional beliefs. Traditional Voodoo priests are very critical of some Evangelicals.
- **Citizens (Medium):** Some Voodoo leaders encourage local youth to act violently against Christians who evangelize.

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** The government demonstrates its despotism by persecuting Christians who oppose its political policies. Those churches who speak against some injustices by the government will struggle to get land and permits to build churches.

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

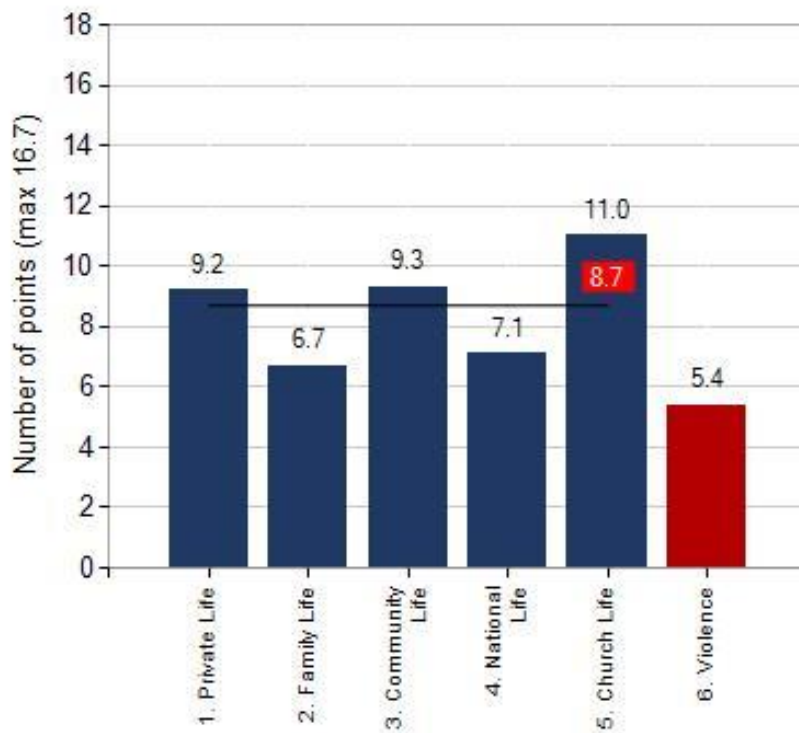
Criminal networks (Medium): Criminal networks in the country have many forms. Some are in government positions facilitating corruption. Some facilitate the market for poaching. Christians who speak out against such practices face reprisals.

The Persecution pattern

The WWL 2023 Persecution pattern for Togo shows (see below):

- The average pressure on Christians is at a level of 8.7points, an increase of 0.3 from WWL 2022.
- Pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* (11.0 points), followed by the *Community* (9.3) and *Private spheres* (9.2).
- The score for violence is 5.4 points, an increase of 3 points from WWL 2022 (2.4 points).

WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for Togo



Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2023 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (2.75 points)

Despite Togo being a Christian-majority country, there are some areas where expression of one's faith create difficulties. In local communities where African traditional belief systems (ATR) or Islam are dominant, revealing one's faith in any written form can have severe consequences for Christians, especially for converts.

Block 1.5: It has been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols. (2.75 points)

Similar to 1.4, there are areas where especially converts face this problem. Christians in the northern part of the country around the border with Burkina Faso avoid wearing Christian symbols so as not to provoke attack from jihadist groups based in Burkina Faso which have been expanding the scope of their operations.

Block 1.1: Conversion has been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another. (2.50 points)

This particularly affects converts from Islam. Non-traditional Christian groups often suffer a similar fate at the hands of the dominant historical Christian communities. The responsible engine, drivers, frequency and intensity vary according to location.

Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.50 points)

Acts of Christian worship are very risky in areas where Voodoo or Islam are dominant. As a result, Christian converts worship in hiding to avoid being stigmatized and persecuted by their families when praying, reading the Bible and singing Christian songs.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (2.50 points)

The life of Christians in the northern, western and central parts of the country is restricted and they often struggle to bring relatives together for weddings and other ceremonies. Singing and other forms of wedding celebration at weddings can cause problems. Even though there is the practice of intermarriage in Togo: i) Muslim parents never want their daughters to get married to Christians, of whatever category; ii) Voodoo groups at times make wedding celebrations difficult for Christians; iii) Some Christian groups do the same where weddings involve converts of any category).

Block 2.5: Burials of Christians have been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites. (2.00 points)

Christians struggle to get land for burial places. This is especially true for areas where Animists and Muslims are in the majority (as is the case in the northern and central parts of the country). Burial rites for converts from traditional Voodoo and Islamic families, will not be carried out according to Christian faith in many cases.

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (2.00 points)

In the context of *Islamic oppression* and *Clan oppression*, Christians living in Muslim-dominated parts of the country are sometimes prevented from bringing up their children according to their faith and convictions. This particularly affects converts from Islam. Non-traditional Christian groups often suffer a similar fate at the hands of the dominant historical Christian communities. The responsible engine, drivers, frequency and intensity vary according to location.

Block 2.8: Christian children have been pressured into attending anti-Christian or majority religion teaching at any level of education. (1.75 points)

Geography and demography matter in this context. In the northern and central parts of the country at some schools and universities, Evangelical children have been humiliated, mocked

and insulted by teachers and fellow students for their parents' faith. This problem has caused Christian children to avoid going to schools in areas where there is no alternative.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

Block 3.1: Christians have been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (e.g. for not meeting majority religion or traditional dress codes, beard codes etc.). (3.00 points)

Threats, harassment and obstruction of daily lives in the community is the experience of many Christians in the country especially in the northern and central parts where Voodoo and Islam dominate.

Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (2.75 points)

Monitoring by local Voodoo and Muslim youth is common in central and northern part of the country. Christians and churches in residential areas face some level of hostilities from residents claiming that the church worship is too loud, especially at night. As a way of getting their activities curtailed, residents often report churches to the Directorate of Religious Affairs over this issue. Local communities and authorities sometimes also monitor the activities of convert Christians - again, this has been frequently noticed in the central and northern parts of the country.

Block 3.5: Christians have been put under pressure to take part in non-Christian religious ceremonies or community events. (2.75 points)

This is also another common problem that Christians face in Togo. Converts any any Christians living in Animist areas are regularly compelled to attend and participate in traditional rites. Converts from Islam are also expected to join in Ramadan. What makes the matter confusing is that some Christians practice both Voodoo and Christianity and put pressure on those who refuse to combine Voodoo and Christian faith.

Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (2.75 points)

Participation in communal institutions has religious elements in some instances. A Christian from a church under surveillance is unlikely to be able to participate in communal institutions without any problems. Non-traditional Christian groups are also known to be obstructed by the majority of historical Christian denominations.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

First, there are government officials who target those who are outspoken; secondly, there is the issue of *Islamic oppression*; and thirdly, there is a threat from adherents of Voodoo (*Clan oppression*). In the northern and central parts of the country where Animists and Muslims are the majority, locals who are in power also belong to those faiths. That means Christians often face discrimination when they engage with these people. In some situations, it has such a serious impact that some have had to migrate south to search for better opportunities where Christians are a majority.

Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

This is partly related to 4.5. In the government, in ministerial departments and in other areas of administration, Evangelical Christians have regularly been bypassed when it comes to promotion. In the northern and central parts of the country, all categories of Christian face serious problems in this respect. In the south, it affects more of the Evangelicals because a) officials are often from the Catholic Church and b) the government does not like outspoken Evangelicals.

Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.00 points)

There are two sources of pressure involved: First, there are government officials or community leaders who impose such restriction in areas largely dominated by Voodoo or Muslims; secondly, freedom of religion in general is also restricted in the country. In answering the question: "Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?", Freedom House reported in its Global Freedom Index 2022: "Though citizens speak openly in private discussion, they may be arrested on incitement or other charges for speaking critically about the government to journalists or human rights organizations." This includes Christians who speak out about cases of persecution or against government injustice and corruption.

Block 4.14: Those who caused harm to Christians have deliberately been left unpunished. (2.75 points)

Those who commit acts of persecution on behalf of the government do not face consequences. Animist or Muslim persecutors of Christians are also nearly always left unpunished. This is due to the mixture of Persecution engines in a given location and happens frequently in the central and northern parts of the country. Some people damage churches by throwing rocks and bully the children of Christian families, for instance. They do this with absolute impunity.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (4.00 points)

This is one of the most challenging aspects of persecution for churches in Togo. As well as having to pay 260 dollars for applying for registration, the authorities often then refuse to carry out the actual registration process. As noted by the US State Department (IRFR 2021): "Similar to previous years, the government did not act on approximately 900 pending registration applications from religious groups and has not accepted new applications since 2013. Most pending registration applications came from Christian evangelical religious movements."

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.25 points)

Monitoring happens for two main reasons: First, the authorities monitor what is being taught and discussed in churches. Secondly, in Muslim or Voodoo-dominated areas, church monitoring is also widespread, carried out by local communities. There have been many complaints about the noise made by church groups in the central and northern parts of the country. Also, churches are being monitored to see who is going there. There is always the suspicion that they could be encouraging the conversion of Animists and Muslims to the Christian faith..

Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (3.25 points)

This is one of the most difficult forms of pressure for Christians in Togo. Churches have been unable to rent houses from Muslims. Also, Christian communities cannot obtain land for church-building without great difficulty and often their plans are completely refused by the local authorities. This is also linked to the issue of monitoring and lack of registration. During the WWL 2023 reporting period, it was still the case that Christians were denied licenses to build or renovate their churches.

Block 5.4: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities inside their place of worship. (3.25 points)

There have been many occasions where the police were called out to stop Christian activities (often due to complaints about noise-levels). Certain Christian groups have also made complaints against other Christian groups' activities. Even though the leaders of the various religious groups try to diffuse issues, the grassroots members and some ultra-conservatives do not want to see any other form of faith operating in their neighborhood. This problem has led to some Christians even ceasing their church attendance.

Violence

Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following 5 points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:

1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced. Possible reasons for this may be:

- Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.
- In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.
- If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.
- In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.

2. Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:

- Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).
- In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.
- Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately. Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other oppressive factors that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. These numbers could be immense.

3. For further discussion (with a focus on the complexity of assessing the numbers of Christians killed for their faith) please see World Watch Monitor's article dated 13 November 2013 available at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/number-of-christian-martyrs-continues-to-cause-debate/>.

4. The use of symbolic numbers: In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10*, 100* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000*, 100,000* and 1,000,000*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

Togo: Violence Block question		WWL 2023	WWL 2022
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	0	0
6.2	How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	5	0
6.3	How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.4	How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	0	0
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	12	10 *
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	100 *	10 *
6.9	How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10	1
6.10	How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	0	10 *
6.11	How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	10	10 *
6.12	How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	2	0

5 Year trends

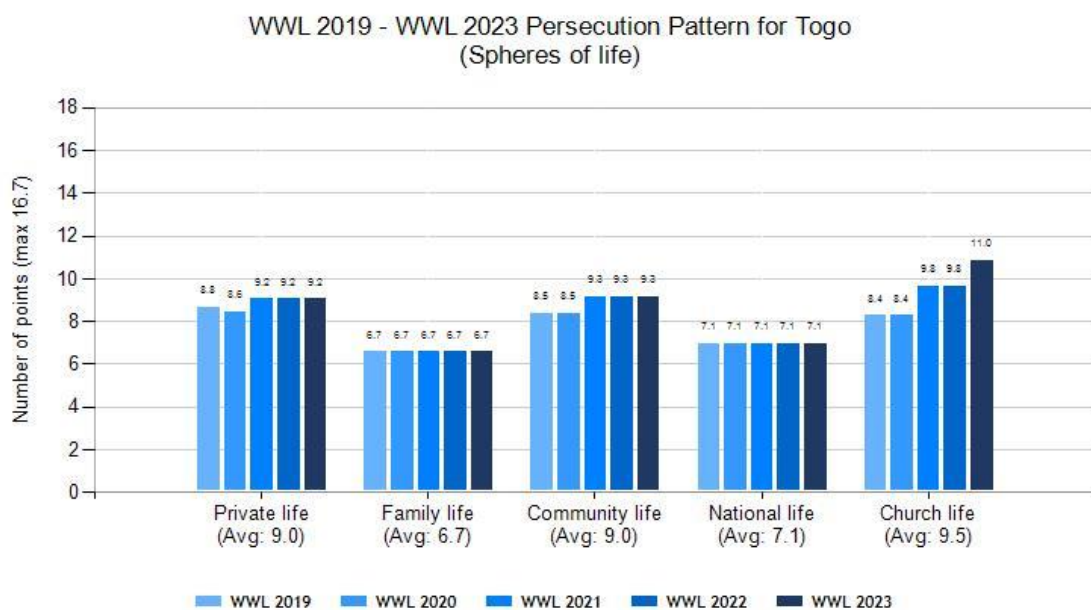
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

5 Year trends: Average pressure

Togo: WWL 2019 - WWL 2023	
Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2023	8.7
2022	8.4
2021	8.4
2020	7.9
2019	7.9

The table above shows that the level of average pressure on Christians ranges from 'fairly high' (7.9 points) to 'high' (8.7 points). Except for WWL 2019 and WWL 2020, average pressure has been well over 8.0 points.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life

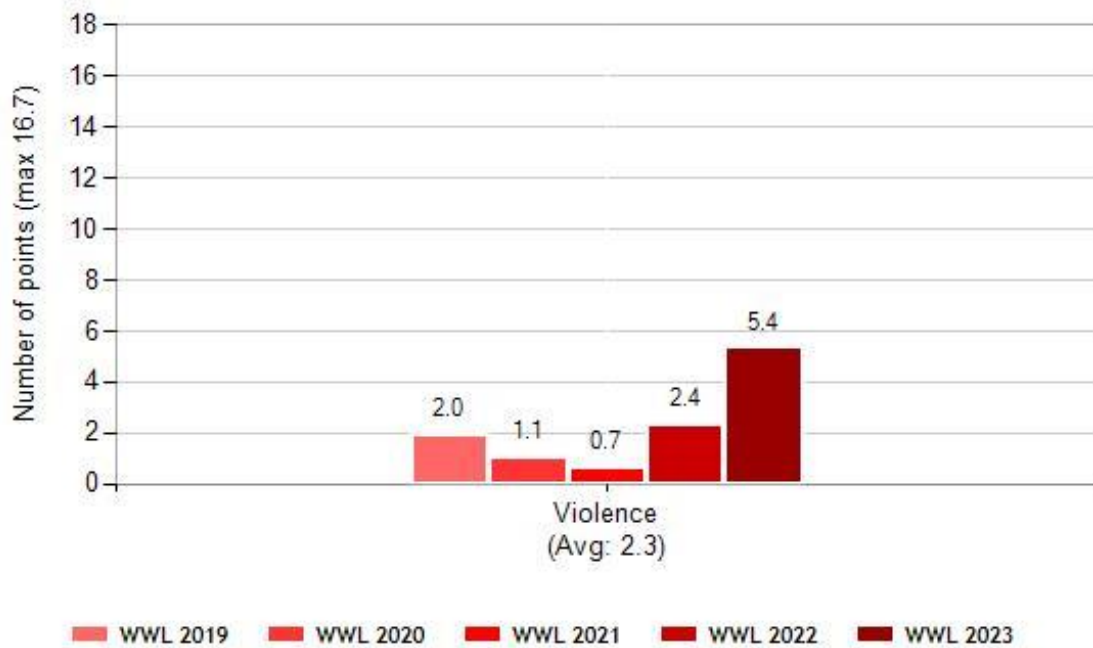


The chart above shows the levels of pressure in the different *spheres of life* over the past five years. Levels remained stable in *Family* and *National life*. The rises in pressure in *Church life* have been the most dramatic.

5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

The graph below shows five year scores for violence. The score for violence fluctuated at 'low' and 'very low' levels over the first four WWL reporting periods, but shot up to 5.4 points in WWL 2023.

WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for Togo (Violence)



Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions; Discrimination/harassment via education
Political and Legal	Denied access to Christian religious materials, teachings and rites; Denied custody of children; Forced divorce; Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Forced out of home – expulsion; Forced to flee town/country; Incarceration by family (house arrest); Targeted Seduction; Trafficking; Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Denied access to social community/networks; Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

As is the case for men, women and girls in Togo may find themselves involved against their will in traditional rites and practices, such as Voodoo or 'generation parties', depending on the communities in which they live. A country expert explains: “The patriarchal law that subjects them to male authority makes women and girls vulnerable to persecution. The financial precariousness of women makes them vulnerable. The girl's lack of schooling easily exposes her to persecution. ... She has no right to personal choice.” These vulnerabilities inadvertently expose economically disadvantaged women and girls to sexual exploitation by illicit networks — many of them are sold into sexual slavery without their consent ([USDS, 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report](#)).

Converts from Muslim and Traditional African Religion backgrounds face additional challenges for their faith. Forced marriage is a common method of preventing female converts from leaving their parent’s religion. Some Muslim families have deliberately forced their daughters to marry a strict Muslim husband to prevent them from living as practicing Christians. They are prevented from marrying another Christian of their choice, as the family will oppose the marriage based on religion. Animist parents have been known to act similarly.

Local sources report that there is a high intolerance to converts from Islam to Christianity especially in the central and northern regions; only widows and outcasts are allowed to become Christians. “Many women are expelled from their homes because of their conversions in the north and far north. In some cases, after several months or years they have the opportunity to see their children again but rarely to return to their homes,” a source disclosed. Female converts characteristically face physical beatings, abandonment, sexual abuse including rape, verbal abuse, disinheritance, eviction and threats. If already married, significant pressure is also applied on their spouse to divorce them and refuse the convert custody of their children. It often occurs that an unmarried convert is forced to accept a marriage arranged by her parents to a non-Christian. If she refuses, this may lead to her being abducted and forcibly taken to the home of the intended man. Despite Togolese law stipulating that both parties must consent to marriage, forced marriages such as these continue to take place in [several regions](#) across the country (HRW, 17 November 2022; [OECD](#), 2019, “Social Institutions and Gender Index: Togo”). In extreme cases, forms of sexual slavery have been reported.

Church leaders and pastors encourage new converts to keep their distance from their families in the light of these harsh responses. Christian women who leave Catholicism can also face many of the aforementioned forms of pressure and violence.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	Discrimination/harassment via education; Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Political and Legal	Denied access to Christian religious materials, teachings and rites; Forced divorce; Imprisonment by government
Security	Abduction; Trafficking; Violence – physical
Social and Cultural	Denied access to social community/networks; Denied food or water; Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

Christian men and boys can be affected by cultural traditions such as Voodoo, which sometimes results in traditional practices inflicting suffering on children. This is particularly prevalent in rural areas. They can also be [forcibly recruited](#) by Islamist groups for domestic terrorism or, by criminal gangs for drug trafficking (VOA, 13 July 2022). Christian leaders who speak out against the government risk being arbitrarily arrested and harassed by state agents. Sources report that communications of church leaders are closely monitored by the government in a bid to intimi-

date and repress critical voices. A country expert explains: “The increased use of electronic surveillance software to spy and intercept communications of Christians and senior church leaders is eroding all the remaining [safe] spaces that citizens had. The surveillance software used is able to access phone microphones without the knowledge of the owner. Increasing arbitrary arrests are also leading to self-censorship.” Pastors who do not engage in politics or encourage their followers to the regime are disapproved.

The harshest persecution, however, is experienced by converts. Male Christians from a Muslim or Animist background can face physical abuse, verbal harassment, rejection, disinheritance, reduced food, threats and stigma because of their faith. Some men and boys are forced to flee as a result. Reports further indicate that Christians may be denied property lettings for a business, or is dismissed from work in favor of a Muslim employee.

Male converts come under harsh scrutiny in their local communities and can face intimidation and threats on a daily basis, including forced divorce. “Christian converts who are men report that once their families find out about their new faith, their wives and children are taken from them,” a source revealed.

Persecution of other religious minorities

Most Togolese are followers either of Christianity, ATR or Islam. According to the US State Department IRFR 2021: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Nichiren Buddhists, followers of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, Baha’is and Hindus are among other religious groups in the country. There were no reports about Muslims, adherents of Animism or these other religious groups experiencing any significant problems due to their faith.

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Islamic oppression

West Africa has become a hotspot of radicalization and Islamic militancy. Experts believe that what is happening in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger could soon engulf the entire region; it is only a matter of time. Since Togo borders Burkina Faso, a country that has been struggling to contain the impact of violent Islamic militancy, it is possible that this impact will be increasingly felt in Togo. Furthermore, many Muslims from Nigeria are targeting Evangelicals for attacks, especially in Lome. There is deep fear among governments in the region that the jihadist movement is expanding towards the coast.

Clan oppression

Togo has over 40 different ethnic groups and a significant portion of the country's population still adheres to traditional belief systems. In many instances, Evangelicals doing mission work among Animists face serious opposition. This is likely to continue in the future.

Dictatorial paranoia

This Persecution engine has been operating for decades. The ruling party has been harassing and silencing those who oppose it. Freedom House's Global Freedom Index 2022 reports in its country overview:

- "While regular multiparty elections have taken place since 1992, Togo's politics have been controlled since 1963 by the late Gnassingbé Eyadéma and his son, current president Faure Gnassingbé. Advantages including security services dominated by the president's ethnic group and malapportioned election districts have helped Gnassingbé and his party retain power. Opposition calls for constitutional and electoral reforms have been harshly repressed for years."

There is no indication that this is likely to change in the near future. Thus, Christians who want to speak out against injustice in the country will keep facing persecution.

Organized corruption and crime

Togo has shown no improvement in terms of corruption. In fact, the situation is deteriorating according to Transparency International (CPI 2021). Nepotism and blatant bribery are widespread. This means that Christians who want to take their case to court will not get a fair hearing. Those speaking out against persecution or injustice in general are likely to continue facing intimidation and similar attempts at silencing them.

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: USDS, 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/togo/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: several regions - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/17/togo-submission-un-committee-rights-child>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: OECD - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/TG.pdf>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: forcibly recruited - <https://www.voanews.com/a/togo-experts-aim-to-prevent-islamist-insurgents-from-recruiting-youth-/6657400.html>

Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on the new Research & Reports page of the website od.org. As in earlier years, they are also available on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) using the following links:

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Togo>