

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 17/93 Extrajudicial executions

26 January 1993

TOGO: 16 people in a peaceful demonstration in Lomé

At least 16 demonstrators and possibly as many as 24 were killed during a peaceful demonstration in the capital, Lomé, on 25 January 1993. A police officer was also killed, apparently by a stray bullet from a colleague.

The opposition had organised the demonstration to show their support for an initiative by the French and German governments to try to resolve the political deadlock between President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, the transitional government, and the Haut Conseil de la République (HCR), the transitional parliamentary body. The demonstrators began to gather in front of the HCR building, where the HCR, the French Minister for Cooperation and the German Minister of State for Foreign Affairs were to meet. The Togolese security forces, which included units of paramilitary police force (*Gendarmerie*), the army and the anti-riot brigade (brigade anti émeute) ordered the demonstrators to move to the nearby *Place de la Libération* and then apparently opened fire without warning killing at least 14 demonstrators and wounding more than 50 others. Journalists and the French and German Ministers went to the hospital morgue and saw the bodies of demonstrators who had been killed. In a press interview, the visiting ministers said they had advised President Gnassingbé Eyadéma to return the army to the barracks to stop it interfering in the political domain.

The Togolese Minister of the Interior subsequently issued a statement saying that twelve people, including one police officer, had been killed. He claimed the security forces fired in the air after one of their colleagues was attacked by demonstrators. However, eye-witnesses have reported a quite different version of the events.

Amnesty International is urging the Togolese authorities to establish an independent inquiry into these killings, and to ensure that any member of the security forces responsible for unlawful killing is brought to justice. The organization is also urging the authorities to respect the internationally recognized rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After months of violent confrontations between the security forces and opponents of one-party rule in early 1991, President Eyadéma and his government agreed to introduce a multi-party political system and hold a National Conference, which took place from July to August 1991. The National Conference examined human rights violations since President Eyadéma came to power in 1967. It elected Joseph Kokou Koffigoh as Prime Minister, who nominated a transitional government to run the country until elections could be held. These were scheduled first for early 1992 but were repeatedly delayed, with President Eyadéma remaining as Head of State during this transitional period. Both during the National Conference and subsequently, the army has tried to halt this process of reform. Although the National Conference provided

for power to be in the hands of the transitional government rather than the President, in practice there has been continuing rivalry between the two, with the President retaining control over the armed forces, which have acted with impunity. As a result of this increasing instability, elections have been postponed. In mid-January, President Eyadema attempted to dismiss Prime Minister Koffigoh, but then reinstated him as Prime Minister. The Franco-German delegation was in Togo in an attempt to resolve this worsening political crisis.

When political killings or other violations of human rights have occurred during the transitional period, the authorities have generally failed to carry out independent and impartial investigations to establish exactly what happened and to recommend remedies. This repeated failure implies that the armed forces are not accountable for their actions before the law. It is therefore particularly important that an investigation be carried out into the killings on 25 January

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1993 by an appropriate public body, making its findings and recommendations public as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported killing of at least 16 demonstrators on 25 January at the hands of the security forces;
- calling upon the authorities to establish an independent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the deaths which took place during demonstrations on 25 January 1993 with a view to bringing to justice any member of the security forces responsible for an unlawful killing;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly is respected;
- calling for an impartial inquiry into the use of firearms and lethal force by the security forces against peaceful demonstrators, in contravention of the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (adopted by the 8th UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders on 7 September 1990).

APPEALS TO

1) President

Son Excellence Monsieur le Général Gnassingbé Eyadéma
Président de la République
Palais présidentiel
Avenue de la Marina
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Président de la République, Lomé, Togo

Telexes: 5319; 5419; 5201 TMS THG

Faxes: (228) 21 18 97 / (228) 21 32 04

Salutation: Monsieur le Président/Dear President

2) Chief of Army Staff

Monsieur le Général de brigade Bassabi Bonfoh
Chef d'Etat-major général
Camp militaire Tokoin
Boulevard des Armées
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Chef d'Etat-major, Lomé, Togo

Telexes: 5477 DSFAT

Salutation: Monsieur le Chef d'Etat-Major/Dear Chief of Army Staff

3) Prime Minister

Monsieur Joseph Kokou Koffigoh
Premier Ministre, Ministre de la Défense
La Primature
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Premier Ministre, Lomé, Togo
Faxes: (228) 21 20 40 / (228) 21 08 50

Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre/Dear Prime Minister

4) Minister of the Interior

Monsieur Agbéyomé Kodjo
Ministre de l'Administration territoriale et de la Sécurité
Ministère de l'Administration territoriale et de la Sécurité
Rue Albert Sarrault
Lomé, Togo

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Administration territoriale et de la Sécurité,
Lomé, Togo**

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

M. le Commissaire de police Baba
Commissariat central
Lomé, Togo

and to diplomatic representatives of Togo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 March 1993.