

EXTERNAL

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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
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United Kingdom

£TOGO: @SUMMARY OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERNS DURING 1991

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of growing opposition to the government of President Gnassingbe Eyadema, 1991 has been a year of street protests and strikes. These have led to a decision by President Eyadema to introduce a multi-party political system and to hold a National Conference about the country's political future. The National Conference, which ended in late August, elected a Prime Minister, Kokou Koffigoh, who has nominated a transitional government which will take executive decisions until elections take place in early 1992. President Eyadema remains President of the Republic during this transitional period.

It was in March 1991 that President Eyadema agreed to meet opposition leaders and accepted their demands for a general amnesty for imprisoned government opponents, for a National Conference and for rapid moves towards multi-party democracy. The amnesty resulted in the release of all political prisoners, including those arrested and convicted after an attempted coup in September 1986.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

However, a series of extrajudicial executions took place in April 1991. On 11 April, 28 bodies were discovered in the Bè lagoon, just outside the capital, Lomé. The victims had been killed the previous day following two days of violent street protests. Independent sources alleged that the killings had been carried out by the security forces but the authorities initially denied any involvement and blamed the deaths on criminals.

Togo's National Commission of Human Rights (*Commission nationale des droits de l'homme*), established by the government in 1987, investigated the killings and, confirming that a total of 28 bodies had been found in the lagoon on 11 April 1991, concluded on the basis of forensic and oral evidence that the killings had been carried out by members of the Togolese army. Some of the victims

were said to have been deliberately killed after falling into the water, while others were apparently killed first and their bodies thrown into the lagoon.

In July the National Conference called on President Eyadema to punish the perpetrators of the killings, but no action is yet known to have been taken to identify them and bring them to justice.

See Annex 1:

Amnesty International Report 1991 (covering the period January-December 1990)