

Togo

Country Overview

Politics

Togo is a presidential republic in West Africa. President Faure Gnassingbé was first elected in 2005 and has subsequently been re-elected twice for five-year terms. Fighting between the opposition and security forces over Gnassingbé's presidency has caused thousands of Togolese people to flee to neighboring Benin and Ghana.¹

The U.S. Department of State notes that opposition groups have reported changes to electoral procedures that disadvantage non-governing parties. Freedom House reports that opposition parties have had little to no opportunity to increase support or power due to Gnassingbé's strong control over the presidency, Constitutional Court, and National Assembly.² Opposition groups claimed Gnassingbé's win of a fourth term in the 2020 presidential election was fraudulent. Opposition leader, Agbéyomé Kodjo, was arrested along with other party members in April 2020 after claiming he was the legitimate president.³ Mobile messaging applications were blocked on election day. Domestic civil society groups, along with the U.S. National Democratic Institute, were denied observing the election. However, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were allowed to observe. Their reports were uncritical, despite arrests of opposition candidates, and refusals to issue permits for opposition candidates to hold rallies for the elections.⁴

Economy

Togo's economy is dependent on capital-intensive export commodities such as phosphate, gold, cocoa, and coffee. In 2018, gold accounted for approximately 23 percent of Togo's exports, signaling an increasing dependency on the product and higher vulnerability to economic shocks.⁵ 80 percent of total exports are concentrated in its top ten country trade partners, and likewise, 70 percent of imports come from its top ten trade partners.⁶

Coffee, cocoa, and cotton production in Togo have not expanded fast enough to keep up with population growth and rising global consumption. Land required for export agricultural commodities, along with mining for phosphates, occupies only 11.3 percent of the country's territory.⁷ Agribusiness development has been a challenge because heavy taxation along the agricultural value chain promotes informality and reduces competitiveness.⁸



Togo has begun to rebound from economic decline following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 5.3 percent growth rate in 2021.⁹ Togo has also been engaged in business reforms and large infrastructure projects to attract more foreign investment, which is a high priority for the Togolese government.¹⁰

Social/Human Development

There are approximately 40 different ethnic groups in Togo, the largest being Éwé, Mina, Tem, and Kabyé.¹¹

Education access has been improving in the country since the government eliminated enrollment fees for primary school. Girls are still underrepresented, enrollment in secondary and tertiary schools remains low, and the educational quality is reported to be poor.¹²

Although Togo's population is rapidly urbanizing, development is constrained by poor connectivity, overcrowding, inefficient use of public land, and fragmented cities. Low labor productivity reflects a mismatch between the demand for skilled workers and the education system. Informality in most economic sectors is high, with approximately 75 percent of the workforce being categorized as vulnerable self-employed, or "own-account workers," where safe working conditions, pay, and productivity are not guaranteed.¹³

The poverty line has continuously decreased over the past decade from 58.7 percent in 2011 to approximately 45.5 percent in 2019.¹⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the extreme poverty rate, with levels at a high of 46.6 percent in 2020 due to job loss and inflation.¹⁵

Togo's Human Development Index (HDI) score reported in 2020 was 0.515, reflecting a low human development category with a rank of 167 out of 189 countries.¹⁶ Togo's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita has increased by approximately 21.7 percent between 1990 and 2019.¹⁷

U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary (2021)

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2

According to the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, trafficking risk may be found among children in export supply chains including the agricultural sector—particularly on coffee, cocoa, and cotton farms, as well as in stone and sand quarries. Children are also vulnerable to trafficking in construction, salvage yards, the mining sector, and machinery repair.

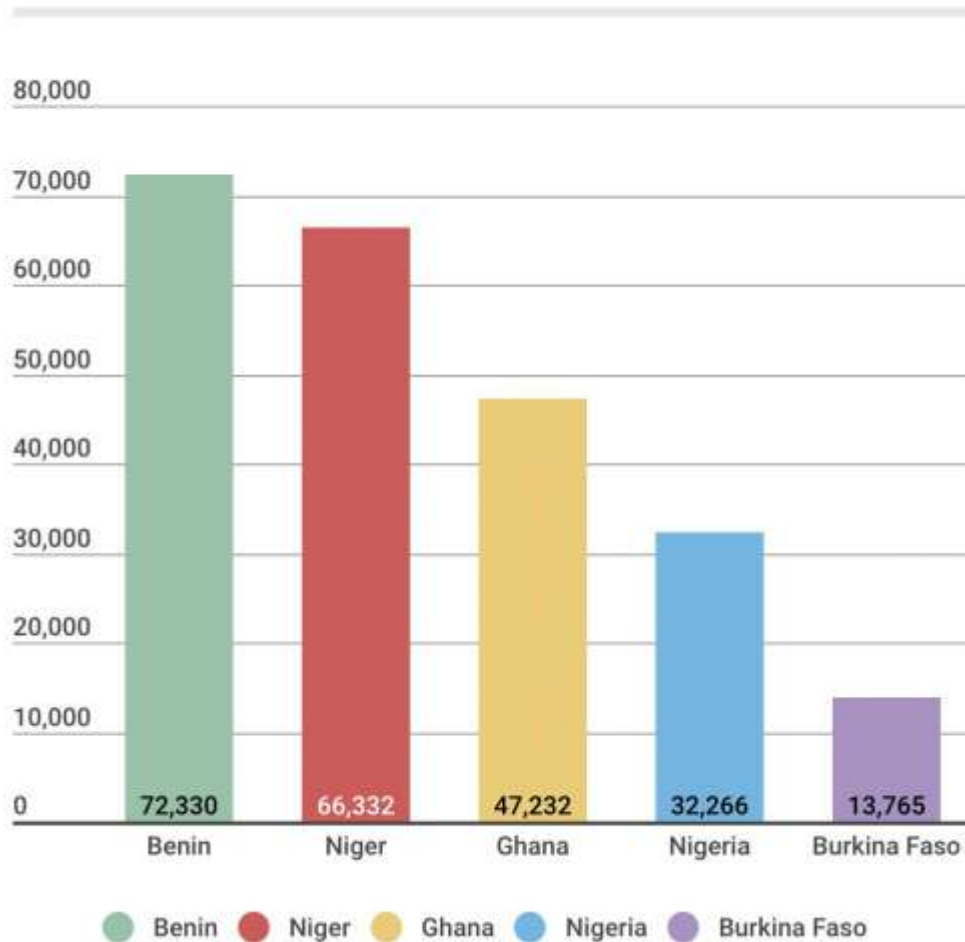


Read the full TIP Report at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/togo/>.

Migrants and Other Vulnerable Populations

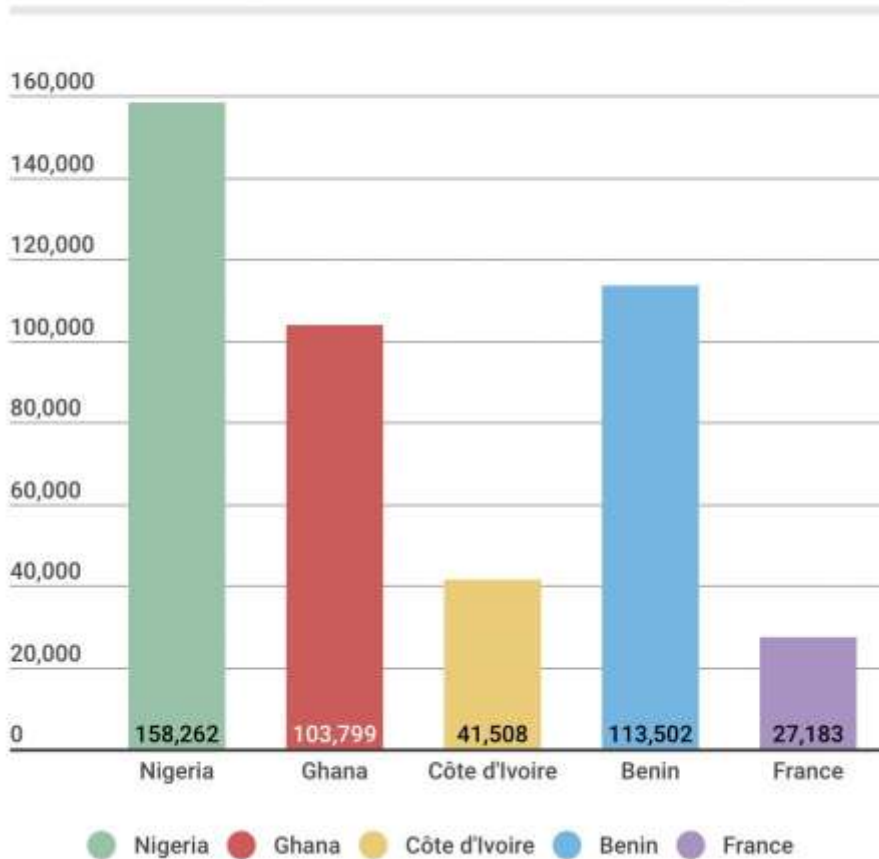
Togo has had a negative net migration since the early 1980s.¹⁸ Over 250,000 of the migrants to Togo came from less developed neighboring regions.¹⁹ The largest source countries for migrants to Togo include Benin, Niger, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria.²⁰

Migrants to Togo



The top destination countries for migrants from Togo included Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and France.²¹

Migrants from Togo

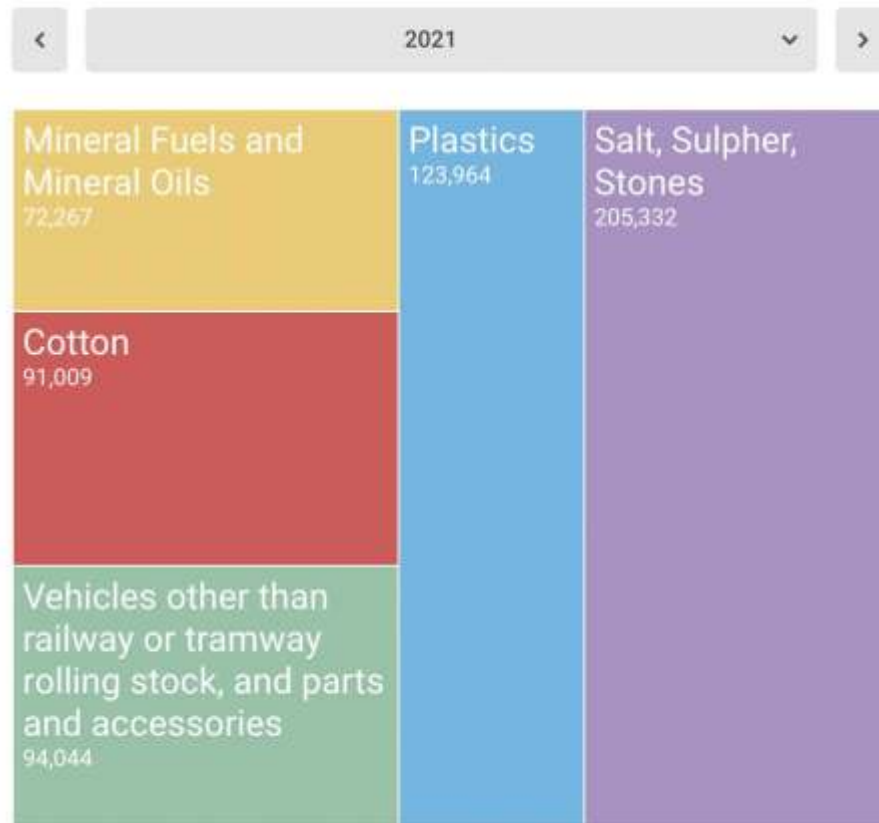


Exports and Trade

Togo's top exports in 2020 included phosphates, plastics, cement, cotton, mineral fuels and oils, motorcycles, and gold.²²



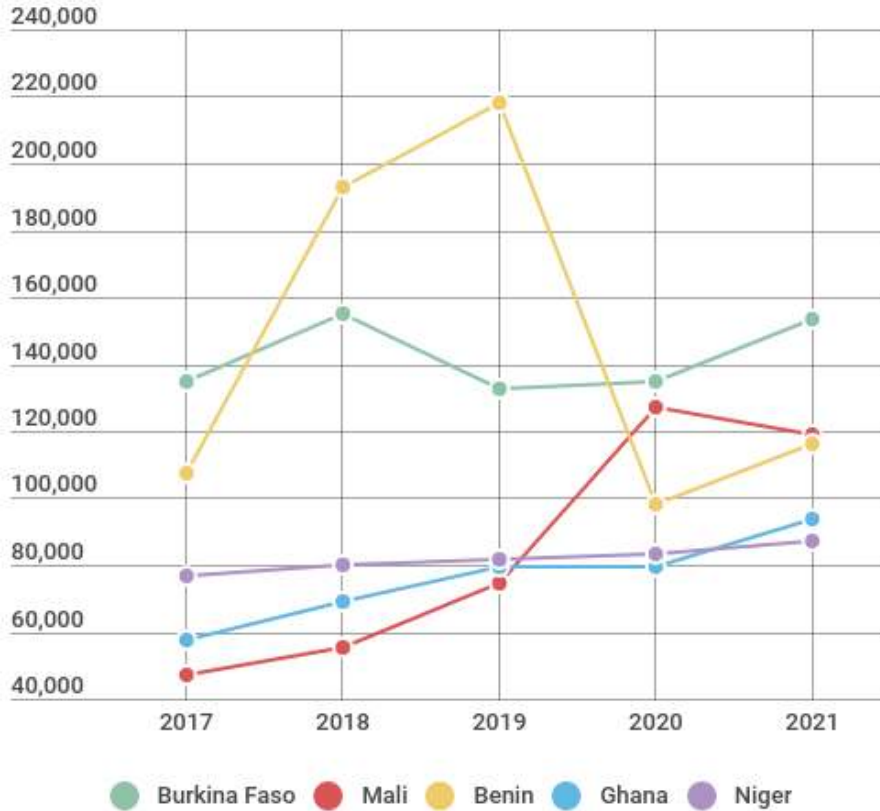
Top Commodity Exports (USD/Thousands)



The top importers of goods from Togo include Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Ghana, and Niger.²³



Togo Export Partners (USD/Thousands)



Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

Freedom of Association

The law provides for the rights of workers to form and organize unions, with exceptions for security forces, firefighters, and police officers. The law also protects workers' rights to bargain collectively and to strike. There are no explicit provisions prohibiting employers from retaliating against striking workers, but employers must receive authorization from the labor inspectorate



before they fire workers, and workers fired illegally must be reinstated.²⁴ Workers in the country's Export Processing Zone (EPZ) are allowed to form two unions. However, these workers are not legally protected from anti-union discrimination. According to the U.S. Department of State, the government has effectively enforced freedom of association laws, especially outside of the EPZ.²⁵

Working Conditions

The minimum wage was set at CFA 35,000 (USD \$62) per month by a national collective bargaining agreement. The legal workweek for nonagricultural workers is 40 hours with at least one 24-hour rest period per week. Agricultural workers are not to work more than 2,400 hours per year, which comes to 46 hours per week.²⁶ The law limits excessive overtime work and requires specific overtime compensation, which has rarely been respected in the private sector, according to the U.S. Department of State.²⁷

The number of labor inspectors in the country has been judged to be insufficient, and penalties for violations of the labor law too low to be effective. Togo's labor laws cover migrant workers, but they do not cover workers in the informal sector and are limited in the country's EPZ.²⁸

Discrimination

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, citizenship, national origin, political opinion, and language. Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or communicable disease status, including HIV/AIDS, is not prohibited. According to the U.S. Department of State, discrimination law is not effectively enforced, and discrimination occurs in practice, especially with respect to gender.²⁹

Forced Labor

The law prohibits forced labor, but the U.S. Department of State reports that the government has not fully met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Investigations are infrequent in cases where forced labor is suspected. This is, in part, because investigators are required to pay for their own travel and accommodations, as well as the fact that penalties are not enforced.³⁰

While workers have the right to strike in Togo, public workers can face legal requisition and be subjected to six days of forced labor. Forced and child labor is reported to occur in the mining sector, domestic work, roadside shops, and vending, as well as in the agriculture sector.³¹

Child Labor

The law sets the legal minimum working age at 15, with children under 18 being prohibited from working at night and in hazardous work.³² However, there are exceptions for hazardous work for children ages 16 and 17.³³ According to the U.S. Department of State, child labor laws have not been effectively enforced in practice and penalties for violations are not enough to



deter violations.³⁴ Furthermore, minimum age requirements, along with the compulsory education age of 15 have reportedly not been enforced for workers in the informal sector.³⁵

Civil Society Organizations

The Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Dialogue in Togo is primarily responsible for enforcing laws against the worst forms of child labor. This agency has often collaborated with UNICEF, the ILO, as well as police and customs officials, among others, to raise awareness of forced child labor in Togo.³⁶

The U.S. Department of State reports that domestic and international human rights groups “operated generally without government restriction.”³⁷

In February 2022, the UNDP provided CFA 146 million (USD \$225,965.37) to nine civil society organizations to focus on natural resource management and the environment, for a total of \$3.3 million in aid for civil society in Togo.³⁸

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	In force
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	In force
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	In force
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	Not ratified
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	Not ratified



Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Togo scored 83.6 on the Fragile States Index, placing it in the “Alert” category, ranking it 42nd out of 179 countries in 2022.³⁹ According to the OECD, Togo continues to remain in the impoverished fragile states category, in part due to the state's continued use of force and extra-legal killings.⁴⁰

Togo’s percentile rank for political stability and absence of violence/terrorism was 15.57 on the World Bank’s 2020 Worldwide Governance Indicators report, a decline from 16.03 in 2019.⁴¹

Level of Crime and Violence

According to the U.S. Department of State, the Togolese police often did not respond to incidences of crime and violence.⁴² Togo is reported to be a drug-trafficking and money laundering hub due to the weakened state enforcements.⁴³ The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime reports that Islamist terrorist groups have taken advantage of Togo's smuggling profits in illicit business activities.⁴⁴

State Persecution

The Kabyé ethnic group dominates the government and the security services in the country, and the Éwé, Togo’s largest ethnic group, continue to be excluded from political positions. In the 1990s, members of Southern tribes experienced ethnic and political repression from the Kabyé-dominated government. Between 300,000 and 350,000 Togolese fled to Benin and Ghana due to this state persecution, though most of them returned in 1997.⁴⁵ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR) was created in Togo to investigate human rights violations and state persecution of 2005, with 35,000 victims already identified.⁴⁶

In 2019, parliament passed a law citing national security that allows the Minister of Territorial Administration to ban assemblies and restrict civil rights through demonstrations, as well as blocking mobile phone services, thereby restricting freedom of speech and assembly.⁴⁷ Parliament passed a law in 2019 that would allow the Minister of Territorial Administration to order house arrests and identity checks, as well as the right to evict foreign nationals.⁴⁸

Level of Corruption

In 2021, the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scored Togo at 30 out of 100, where 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean.” Furthermore, Togo ranked 128 out of 180 countries, thereby signaling a significantly high level of corruption.⁴⁹

The U.S. Department of State describes corruption among the country’s police force as “endemic,” and reports that officials engage in corrupt practices with impunity. For example, traffic police were reported to stop individuals on in-country movement to solicit bribes.⁵⁰



Judicial corruption is also a persistent issue in Togo. The judiciary was reportedly subject to undue influence and control from the executive branch.⁵¹ The Togolese National Assembly created the High Authority for the Prevention of and Fight against Corruption in August 2015, but the organization has no autonomy and a low budget of \$20,000.⁵²

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Togo's HDI score reported in 2020 was 0.515, reflecting a low human development category with a rank of 167 out of 189 countries.⁵³ Due to the informal sector dominating the economy, economic growth remains a challenge despite public investment in infrastructure and attempts from the state to increase agricultural productivity.⁵⁴

Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movement of Migrants

The U.S. Department of State did not report any policies that limited employment options for migrants, or restricted migrants' freedom of movement. Labor law, including wages and working conditions, applied to migrant workers.⁵⁵ Societal discrimination against migrant workers for employment that requires citizenship was reported by the U.S. Department of State.⁵⁶

Level and Extent of Poverty

When adjusted for inequality, the HDI score in Togo is 0.351, with a 30.5 percent inequality of life expectancy, 37.7 percent inequality in education, and 26.9 percent inequality in income.⁵⁷ The primary education completion rate is 88.36 percent, with an 84.29 percent youth literacy rate for children between 15 and 24 years of age.⁵⁸

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Gender Equality Index gave Togo a score of 0.573 in 2019 with a -26.8 percent gender gap in the population that completed secondary education.⁵⁹ Gender inequality in employment is prohibited by law. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, women experience discrimination in pay and pension benefits, especially in the informal sector and in rural areas.⁶⁰

Formal law technically overrules traditional law in Togo, but many women in rural areas are still subject to traditional customs, which allows a husband to control his wife's freedom to work and her earnings. Women also experience discrimination in education and inheritance. There are no formal restrictions on a woman's ability to sign contracts, open bank accounts, or own property in Togo.⁶¹

Rape, including spousal rape, is criminalized in Togo. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, victims of rape rarely report the crime to authorities and when they do,



authorities have generally failed to act. Domestic violence is also a widespread problem in Togo and authorities do not enforce punishment.⁶²

Female genital mutilation/cutting is prohibited by law, though the practice is still reported in isolated communities. The state organized campaigns to educate women on their rights and alternative employment opportunities are offered for victims of female genital mutilation/cutting.⁶³

Landlessness and Dispossession

Togo's judicial system does not adequately protect private property, particularly laws governing inheritance and property of women.⁶⁴ The country's Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission reports that 80 percent of court cases are about land tenure, as only 36 percent of arable land has guaranteed long-term security of tenure.⁶⁵ Cash crops and public projects have impacted land tenure rights, making poor farmers and immigrants particularly vulnerable to land grabbing and large-scale land acquisitions.⁶⁶ Amnesty International's 2016/2017 annual report highlighted protests against evictions due to phosphate extraction.⁶⁷

Environmental Factors

Deforestation due to slash-and-burn agriculture, low rainfall, desertification, and water pollution present the largest environmental threats to Togo's development.⁶⁸ Despite the creation of new boreholes, 40 percent of the population in Togo does not have access to potable water, and only approximately 50 percent have access to electricity.⁶⁹

Additionally, Togo has a very high risk for major infectious diseases from foodborne, waterborne, and vector-borne origins.⁷⁰ USAID reports that Togo scores low on the Environmental Performance Index for Air Quality, with a score of 24.1, which is below the regional average of 27.79.⁷¹

Documented Trafficking Risk in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Phosphates

Phosphates Overview

The largest phosphate company in Togo, Société Nationale des Mines du Togo (SNPT), is state-owned and fuels growth in the agro-industries due to the rising demand for fertilizer around the world.⁷² Togo has large phosphate reserves and phosphate is a critical exported good from Togo. Production of phosphate increased by 87 percent in 2020 according to the Central Bank of West African states, and the industry earned CFA 92 billion in 2019, or approximately \$143,938,232.00.⁷³ Phosphate mining in Togo presents many environmental dangers, such as uncontrolled releases of toxic heavy metals that pollute soil, plants, and water.⁷⁴ Hahotoé in



particular faces severe public health issues, as phosphate pollutants released in the area, exceed the WHO heavy metal pollution index critical value.⁷⁵

Documented TIP Risk in Phosphates

Evictions of local communities have been reported in association with mining development for phosphate production.⁷⁶ The U.S. Department of Labor reported the state has taken advantage of land tenure rites to appropriate land specifically for phosphate production, thereby leaving families homeless. This significantly increases vulnerability to trafficking and child labor due to lost income and land.⁷⁷ Phosphate mining activities have reportedly led to soil degradation that poses challenges for food security to subsistence farmers living near designated mining regions.⁷⁸

Cotton

Cotton Overview

Cotton is among the most important cash crops in Togo. Cotton production in 2020-2021 fell by 43 percent in Togo due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, poor quality of seeds introduced, and flooding in northern Togo. The largest cotton producer in Togo, New Cotton Company of Togo (NSCT), sold 51 percent of its stake to a Singaporean conglomerate because of the fallen output and because 40,000 cotton farmers abandoned their crops to pursue other commodities. Togo's government has plans to revitalize the cotton industry, which include building a processing factory in a new industrial zone.⁷⁹

Documented TIP Risk in Cotton

According to the U.S. Department of State, forced child labor occurs on cotton farms in Togo.⁸⁰ Trafficking and forced labor were reported on cotton fields in Benin with children reportedly taken from Togo.⁸¹

Coffee

Coffee Overview

Togo almost exclusively grows the Robusta coffee variety, which accounts for approximately 10 percent of total exports.⁸² Togo is ranked 33rd among the top coffee-producing countries in the world, producing 12,000 metric tons of coffee.⁸³

Documented TIP Risk in Coffee

According to the U.S. Department of State, forced child labor occurs on coffee farms in Togo.⁸⁴ Primarily local actors from communities organize trafficking activity in Togo's agriculture sector. Children are forcibly transported from Togo for three to four years to work on coffee plantations, often under threat of violence and by withholding pay.⁸⁵ As a coffee-producing country, Togo has a national action plan to address child labor concerns, but not forced labor.⁸⁶



Cocoa

Cocoa Overview

Cocoa production is limited in Togo. Cocoa and coffee are typically produced together on small farms.⁸⁷ Cocoa is produced mainly in the southwest region of the country.⁸⁸ Cacao farms are on average smaller than one hectare for each household. Most farmers are organized into unions under the umbrella federation for farmers (FUPROCAT), with the largest being Unité Technique du Café-Cacao (UTCC) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.⁸⁹

Documented TIP Risk in Cocoa

According to the U.S. Department of State, forced child labor occurs on cocoa farms in Togo.⁹⁰ Trafficking networks in Togo are primarily community-based local actors targeting children for forced labor on family farms.⁹¹ Similar to trafficking in the coffee sector, fraudulent recruiters transport victims to neighboring countries, with Togolese trafficking victims primarily forced to harvest cocoa in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.⁹² Across West Africa, including Togo, children from remote areas are forced to work in seasonal cocoa production due to a dramatic decrease in the number of adult workers.⁹³

Gold

Gold Overview

Gold production accounted for 3.14 percent of Togo's GDP in 2020.⁹⁴ Though mining accounts for 20 percent of Togo's export earnings, only a small portion is dedicated to gold. Nevertheless, the state continues to approve mining investments including the Dapaong gold mine.⁹⁵ Togo is also used as a common route for gold smuggling from neighboring countries, particularly Burkina Faso, as informal mining and low taxes on gold attract smugglers and traffickers.⁹⁶

Documented TIP Risk in Gold

Most of the gold that Togo exports is mined in neighboring Burkina Faso and smuggled across the border to take advantage of Togolese export rates.⁹⁷ The worst forms of child labor and trafficking have been reported in Burkinabe gold mines.⁹⁸

The most dangerous forms of child labor were reported in quarries where children were working to crush rocks and carry gravel buckets to provide additional income to support their families.⁹⁹ Such forced labor was primarily reported in small and private-owned quarries in rural areas.¹⁰⁰



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