



CSOs call for actions and firmly condemn after brutal repression, digital censorship and fundamental rights violations in Togo

From [26th](#) to 28th June, the Togolese people have been peacefully mobilising to demand justice, democracy, and political change after two decades of unchallenged power under the regime of [Faure Gnassingbé](#). In response to these legitimate demands, the authorities have reacted with relentless violence. Everyone has witnessed scenes of harassment and beatings in the streets of Lomé.

On Saturday, 28 June, on the third day of this civic mobilisation, the repression intensified: the protests were swiftly and violently dispersed. In Lomé, three lifeless bodies were recovered from the Bè lagoon, their faces swollen. The poignant testimony of the father of one of the victims, a 16-year-old boy, illustrates the brutality of the law enforcement intervention, which pursued young people to the lagoon, taking advantage of a power cut to act in the darkness. To date, we count [seven dead](#) people, dozens injured, and several reported arbitrary arrests. Among those detained is the committed artist KETE Atsou, also known as Cosmakete, following Honoré Sitsopé Sokpor, alias [Affectio](#), and Narcisse T'challa, better known by the pseudonym [Aamron](#), who was released on 23 June.

On the evening of June 29, the Togolese government issued a statement in which it attempted to downplay and justify the disproportionate use of force observed. The authorities worked to trivialise the crackdown and shifted the blame onto “shadowy forces lurking in the background,” thereby obscuring the numerous documented violations on the ground by human rights defenders.

This physical violence has been accompanied by digital violence. The organisation ISOC Togo documented over 1,000 technical anomalies on telecom networks between 25 and 27 June: spikes in latency, session cuts, targeted blocking of news sites, slowdowns on mobile networks... All indications suggest deliberate restrictions on access to information and the internet, with the complicity of certain internet service providers. Access to the internet, a fundamental right, has been censored to silence dissent, which originated on social media and is widely followed. Digital platforms such as TikTok, Telegram and Facebook have been restricted, reinforcing a climate of [informational isolation](#).

The arbitrary arrests and acts of torture against peaceful protesters, along with the intimidation of journalists, are part of a broader context of long-standing restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, opinion, assembly, and peaceful demonstration in Togo. Therefore, we firmly condemn:

- **The excessive use of force** against peaceful protesters;
- **Media censorship and violations of freedom** of expression;
- **The restriction of access to the internet and social media platforms**, in blatant violation of fundamental digital rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

We also demand:

- **The immediate and unconditional release** of Kete Atsou alias **Cosmakete** and all individuals arrested for peacefully exercising their right to protest;
- **The immediate cessation** of both physical and digital repression;
- **The restoration of fundamental freedoms**, including freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and access to information;
- **The immediate and unconditional release** of Honoré Sitsopé Sokpor, alias **Affectio** in prison since 12 January 2025.
- **An independent investigation** into cases of torture and ill-treatment.

We reiterate our request to the new president of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), H.E. Mr Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, to engage in constructive dialogue with the Togolese authorities to review the situation of peaceful protesters detained from 6 to 28 June.

The Togolese people deserve a future based on dignity, justice, and freedom. It is time for the violence and censorship to cease. Continental solidarity is essential. The right to protest, to be informed, and to express oneself is non-negotiable.

Dakar, 30 June 2025

Signatories:

- AfricTivistes
- Afrikajom Center
- Wademos
- Tournons La Page/Togo
- Tournons La Page/Guinée
- Tournons La Page/Côte d'Ivoire
- Front Citoyen Togo Debout/Bénin
- West African Human Rights Defenders Network
- Popular front
- National Network Of Sustainable Development Actors
- Bissau Guinean League for Human Rights
- Center For Strategic Litigation
- Ballondiral
- ADISI-Cameroun