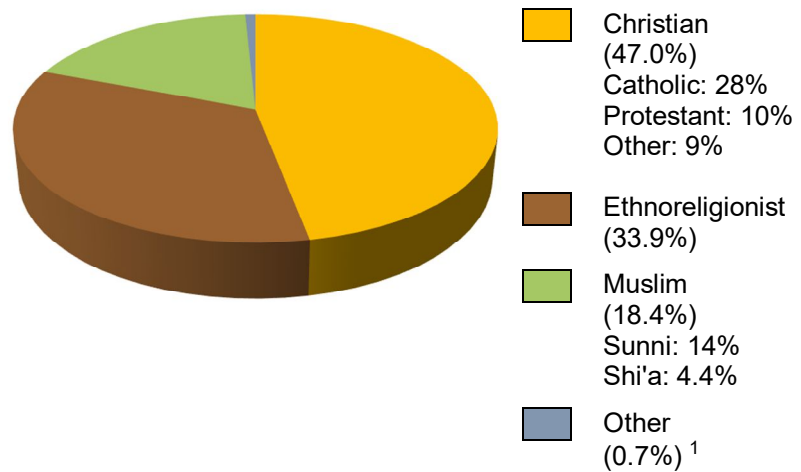
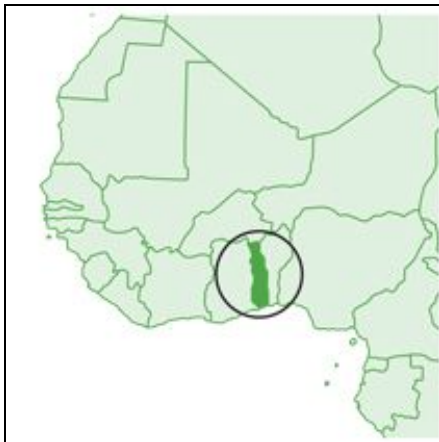


# TOGO



Area:	Population <sup>2</sup> :	Political system:	Major Language(s):
56,785 km <sup>2</sup>	6.3 million	Autocracy <sup>3</sup>	French, Ewe, Mina, Kabye, Dagomba

## Legal Framework on Freedom of Religion and application

Research continues to show that roughly one third of the population follow traditional African beliefs (such as voodoo), while almost 30 percent belong to the Catholic Church and 14 percent to Sunni Islam. Some 10 percent are Protestant and a further 10 percent belong to a variety of smaller faith communities.<sup>4</sup>

As with many other countries of Africa, the boundaries between the different religious practices are frequently somewhat fluid, with Christian and Muslim believers often also following traditional African rituals and customs.

The Republic of Togo is strictly secular in character and run on authoritarian lines. Its constitution bans the formation of political parties based on a particular religious identity.<sup>5</sup> However, the constitution broadly upholds religious freedom, which is also generally respected by the authorities. The government recognises Catholicism, Islam and Protestantism as state religions, but other religions are required to register.<sup>6</sup>

As in many other countries in West Africa, the north of the country is generally more Muslim in character and the south predominantly Christian. Registration for non-state religions is mandatory and is necessary to obtain benefits including fiscal relief. Each religious association must submit its statutes, together with a declaration about its teachings, the names and addresses of its leading personnel, the religious credentials and qualifications of its clerics, a map detailing the location of its headquarters and a declaration of its financial situation. Registration is temporary until the government is satisfied that the group meets ethical and public order expectations. Public celebrations likely to cause disturbance or annoyance, for example loud night-time celebrations, require special permission from the directorate of religious affairs.<sup>7</sup>

There is no formal religious instruction in state schools. However, there are many Catholic, Protestant and Islamic schools in Togo for which the government provides additional paid staff.<sup>8</sup>

## Incidents

There were no institutional changes in regard to religious freedom during the period of the report. Nor were there any reports of note-worthy incidents to the detriment of religious freedom in Togo.

The Catholic Church in Togo is very much engaged in the work of peace and reconciliation. During the ad limina visit of the Catholic bishops of Togo to Rome on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Pope Francis told them that the country had made “notable progress in the political and social field”, and that the Catholic Church had contributed in many ways to this, “not only through her work of evangelisation and human advancement, but also through her commitment for justice and peace”. Pope Francis in particular praised the work of the National Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, founded in 2009, which is assessing the mainly politically motivated acts of violence between 1958 and 2009 and is making proposals to the government aimed at reconciliation. Referring to the political work of the Church, the Pope however warned the bishops against “entering directly into political debates or quarrels”.<sup>9</sup>

On 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Pope Francis also welcomed the President of the Republic of Togo, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, and spoke with him about relations between the Holy See and Togo.<sup>10</sup> They also discussed the further consolidation of these already good relations and the contribution of the Catholic Church to the development of the country, especially in the field of education. Other topics covered included the particular challenges facing the countries of sub-Saharan West Africa and the need to work together for peace and security in the region.

## Prospects for Freedom of Religion

Togo is one of 34 countries forming part of an alliance against Islamist terror, initiated by Saudi Arabia. What this means in practice in the fight against terrorism remains to be seen. However, the fact that Togo is one of only four countries in this alliance with a majority non-Muslim population is seen by many analysts as a sign of just how seriously the threat of jihadist terrorism in West Africa is now being taken in all parts of the region.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country\\_221\\_1.asp](http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_221_1.asp)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14106781>

<sup>3</sup> Togo's democratic institutions remain nascent and fragile. Faure Gnassingbe Eyadema succeeded his father, who ruled the country for 38 years. Military installed as president, Faure Gnassingbe called elections and won. Gnassingbe has won two more elections, in 2010 and 2015. Both were decried by the opposition, but the European Union said the 2015 election "went off calmly, confirming the Togolese people's attachment to democracy". The African Union and regional bloc ECOWAS also said the vote was free and transparent. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14106781>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. State Department 2016: International Religious Freedom Report for 2014

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> [http://de.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/05/11/papst\\_an\\_togos\\_bisch%C3%B6fe\\_politisch\\_sein\\_ja\\_mitmischen\\_nein/1143137](http://de.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/05/11/papst_an_togos_bisch%C3%B6fe_politisch_sein_ja_mitmischen_nein/1143137)

<sup>10</sup> <https://de.zenit.org/articles/president-der-republik-togos-in-audienz-bei-papst-franziskus/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article150009806/Wenn-der-Saudi-mit-dem-Somalier-paktiert.html>