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## TOGO

### Human rights defenders under attack

### Petition



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INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 0DW, UNITED KINGDOM

# TOGO

## Human rights defenders under attack

### Petition

We, human rights defenders in Africa, who include journalists, lawyers, health professionals, students, religious workers, business people and civil servants, are deeply concerned about the plight of our fellow human rights defenders in Togo. Since May 1999, some defenders have been arrested by the Togolese authorities, at least one defender was tortured and many are in hiding for fear of arrest.

We are also concerned that human rights defenders such as independent Togolese journalists, who dare to speak out about human rights violations, are often victims of arrest, harassment and intimidation.

The Togolese security forces have been responsible for human rights violations for three decades -- violations committed with complete impunity. Human rights defenders who have monitored and exposed the violations are themselves under attack.

We denounce these attempts to silence human rights defenders and call upon the Togolese government to respect the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders<sup>1</sup> and to immediately:

- end attacks on human rights defenders;
- guarantee unconditionally the safety of human rights defenders; and
- ensure that human rights defenders are able to work without fear of intimidation or arrest.

We urge the authorities in Togo and the international community to ensure that impartial and independent investigations are carried out into human rights violations, including attacks on human rights defenders, and that those responsible are brought to justice.

It is time for the Togolese government to account!

Name, address/organisation, signature

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<sup>1</sup>Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1998 by Resolution 53/144.