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Plenary sitting

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<TitreType>MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION</TitreType>

<TitreSuite>with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law</TitreSuite>

<TitreRecueil>pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure</TitreRecueil>

<Titre>on Togo</Titre>

<DocRef>(2019/2518(RSP))</DocRef>

<RepeatBlock-By><Depute>Charles Tannock, Karol Karski, Notis Marias, Raffaele Fitto, Ryszard Czarnecki, Pirkko Ruohonen‑Lerner, Angel Dzhambazki, Jana Žitňanská, Monica Macovei, Valdemar Tomaševski, Valdemar Tomaševski, Branislav Škripek</Depute>

<Commission>{ECR}on behalf of the ECR Group</Commission>

</RepeatBlock-By>

B8‑0065/2019

European Parliament resolution on Togo

(2019/2518(RSP))

*The European Parliament*,

* having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
* having regard to the 2006 Global Political Agreement between the EU and Togo,
* having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
* having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Togo has ratified,
* having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981,
* having regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, adopted by the African Union in January 2007,
* having regard to the The Annual Report of the European Union on Human Rights and Democracy in 2017,
* having regard to the communiqué on the 19th session of the Togo-EU political dialogue of 20 November 2018
* having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,

1. whereas several people have been killed in Togo in protest-related violence since 8 December 2018 ahead of contested parliamentary elections on 20 December 2018; whereas clashes between protesters and security forces have been reported around the country;
2. whereas earlier in December a group of 14 opposition parties rejected the date of 20 December for the parliamentary elections and called for reforms for fair and transparent elections and scheduled protests between 8 and 18 December; whereas on 6 December, the Minister of Territorial Administration issued a statement banning the protests on vague and arbitrary grounds, citing a “very high risk of serious breaches to public order”; whereas despite the ban, the opposition decided to go ahead with the protests, which were then dispersed by security forces;
3. whereas the incumbent president of Togo, Faure Gnassingbe, is in power since 2005 after his father, Eyadema Gnassingbe ruled the country for 38 years; whereas in 1992, Eyadema Gnassingbe introduced a constitution that brought in multiparty democracy and limited presidential terms to two; whereas only ten years later, legislators scrapped the term limit; whereas Togo is the only country in the 15-member ECOWAS bloc currently not on a democratic path;
4. whereas the political opposition in Togo demands for the 1992 Constitution of Togo to be amended to limit the presidential term to two five-year terms; whereas they also want Togolese citizens living abroad to be able to participate in elections;
5. whereas in February 2018, an Inter-Togolese political dialogue was set up in Lomé as part of the mediation efforts of President Alpha Condé of Guinea and President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana; whereas while Togo‘s political and civil society actors agree that political dialogue is vital in order to bring stability to the country, political actors disagreed on the format, objectives and prerequisites for participating in the talks;
6. whereas at the July 2018 ECOWAS summit in Lomé, Akufo-Addo and Condé laid out a roadmap with recommendations on ending the political crisis, including instituting a two-round electoral system, making changes to the Constitutional Court, and improving the electoral process, including accelerating the electoral census to produce a more accurate voter roll, giving the diaspora the right to vote, and deploying election observers;
7. whereas protests in Togo quieted while Akufo-Addo and Condé were mediating negotiations and drawing up their roadmap; whereas however, they were reignited in November, when the news spread that the government had made significant changes to the roadmap, including adding non-retroactive term limits to the constitution, which would enable the president to run for another two terms;
8. whereas the violence comes in the context of an intensifying crackdown on the right to freedom of expression in Togo; whereas on 7 December 2018, the National Assembly of Togo adopted a law on cybersecurity which significantly restricts freedom of expression;

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1. Condemns the excessive use of force by the defence and security forces against the protesters in Togo; calls on the Togolese authorities to cease all acts of violence against people exercising the right to freedom of expression and the right of assembly; calls also on the demonstrators to refrain from the use of violence while exercising their rights;
2. Urges the authorities to carry out thorough, independent and impartial investigations into the deaths of protesters and ensure all those found responsible are brought to justice;
3. Deplores that the demonstrations in the country were reportedly banned on vague and arbitrary grounds; calls on Togo’s authorities to respect the right to peaceful assembly in line with their international obligations;
4. Stresses the importance of continuing the implementation of the reforms mandated by ECOWAS, for a genuine process of democratization of Togo, particularly with regard to the electoral process; commends the mediation efforts by President Condé of Guinea and President Akufo-Addo of Ghana and stresses the importance of continuation of the political dialogue;
5. Stresses that regular, transparent and credible elections and freedom of assembly and expression are core principles of democracy, and term limits have proved necessary to allow real electoral competition;
6. Calls on the authorities to repeal or substantially amend the law on cybersecurity to ensure it is brought in line with international human rights law and standards;
7. Calls on the EU to remind the Togolese authorities of the need to respect the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights; urges the EU to monitor the situation and assess the potential measures to be taken;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and National Assembly of the Togolese Republic, the Chairperson of the African Union, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament and representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).