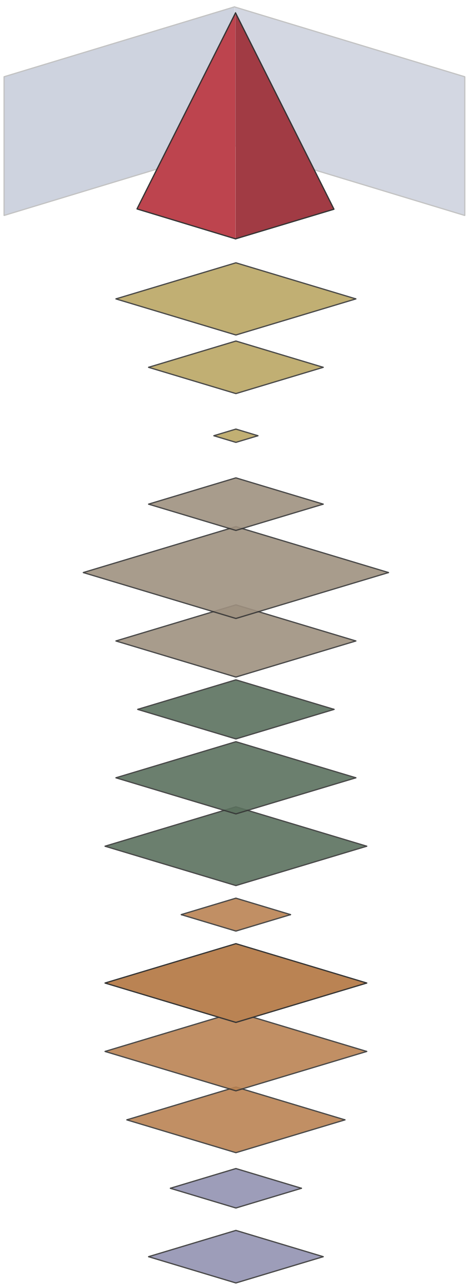
Africa
ORGANISED CRIME INDEX 2025

enact
Enhancing Africa's response to transnational organised crime

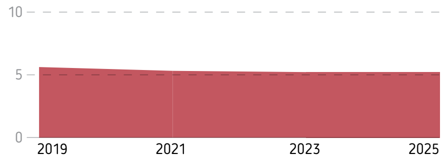
This project is funded by the European Union

TOGO



5.22 ↘0.02
CRIMINALITY SCORE

28th of 54 African countries ↘1
9th of 15 West African countries ↗1



CRIMINAL MARKETS	**4.63**	↘0.13
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	4.00	↗0.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	1.00	↘0.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.50	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	4.50	↗0.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	6.00	↘0.50
HEROIN TRADE	2.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	6.00	↗0.50
CANNABIS TRADE	6.00	↘1.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	3.00	↘2.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	4.00	↗0.50

CRIMINAL ACTORS	**5.80**	↗0.10
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	7.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.50	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.50	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.00	0.00

ISS INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

INTERPOL

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

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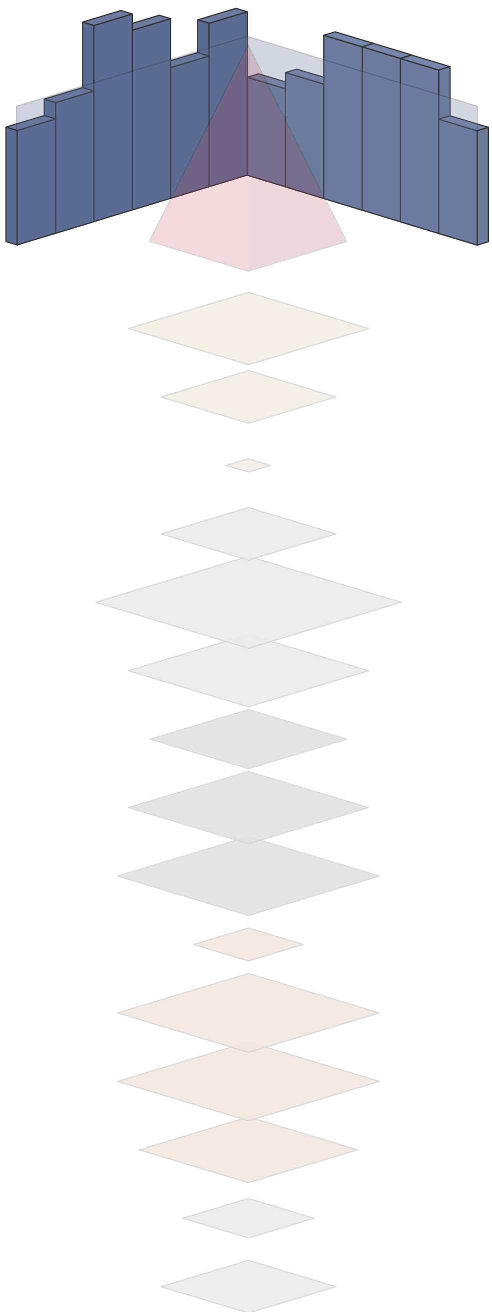
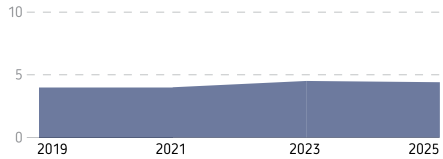


4.42 ↘0.08
RESILIENCE SCORE

18th of 54 African countries ↗1
7th of 15 West African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	3.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	4.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	6.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	5.50	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	3.00	↘0.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	3.50	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.00	↗0.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00	0.00
PREVENTION	5.00	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	3.50	↘1.00

CRIMINALITY

Criminal markets

PEOPLE

Togo is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, driven predominantly by economic stresses, including unemployment. Local criminal networks and international syndicates, as well as illegal recruitment agencies, exploit victims, particularly Togolese women and children for forced labour, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude either in Togo, or overseas in Western Asia. Children from rural areas are commonly trafficked as domestic servants, porters and street vendors, as well as in agriculture, on cotton, cocoa and coffee plantations. Authorities have noted an increase in the number of children forced to beg by corrupt Quranic school teachers, and attempts to transport these children from the Savanes region, on the Segbe border, into Ghana. Traffickers also exploit men and boys for labour in mechanical and carpentry workshops, as well as in stone and sand quarries.

Togo serves as a source and transit area for human smuggling, although smuggling activity is somewhat mitigated by Togo's membership of the Economic Community of West African States, which permits free movement across its internal borders. This notwithstanding, many migrants still opt for using smugglers' services for a number of reasons, including their lack of correct documentation, lack of knowledge of the most appropriate routes, or because smugglers from neighbouring Sahelian countries can act as fixers in destination countries by aiding the migrants in finding work. Young people leaving Togo in search of better living conditions often seek opportunities on gold sites in the Sahel, as well as in the hospitality or construction sectors. Some migrants and refugees are also smuggled on small boats towards Nigeria for onward travel to Central Africa to join the labour market there. The human smuggling and trafficking markets are closely intertwined, increasing migrants' vulnerability to exploitation once they reach transit and destination points.

There is no evidence to indicate the existence of a major extortion and protection racketeering market in Togo.

TRADE

Illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons is not uncommon in Togo, fuelled by regional instability in the Sahel, which has led to the influx of arms, ammunition and combatants. Considerable informal flows of weapons also enter Togo from Ghana, a major producer of artisanal weapons. The northern region of Togo has faced an increase in armed attacks linked to extremist groups, particularly from Burkina Faso, including with improvised explosive devices. Togo functions as a transit point for cross-border arms trafficking in West Africa, particularly to Benin. Despite initiatives to regulate firearms and curb trafficking, including weapon collection and destruction programmes due to porous borders and limited control measures, trafficked arms continue to fuel armed robberies and violent crimes.

Togo remains a significant hub for counterfeit goods, driven by strong local demand and its strategic position as West Africa's primary textile market. Counterfeit medicines originating primarily from India and China, often linked to both formal and informal markets, are prevalent in the country. Counterfeit consumer products such as beverages and personal care items are common, some originating from Nigeria. Togo also serves as a transit point for counterfeit goods arriving on container ships from Asia, with the Port of Lomé facilitating distribution to landlocked countries, especially Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. Cinkassé, the most significant town on the border with Burkina Faso, has been identified as one of the main transit points for illicit goods entering and leaving the country.

The illicit trade in excisable goods mainly involves the smuggling and trade in tobacco products, which is also driven by porous borders, weak border management and inadequate quality control. Togo functions as both a transit and destination country for illicit tobacco products originating from China and neighbouring countries. Despite legal prohibitions, the local market is substantial and socially accepted, driven by lower prices compared to the formal market. For the most part, smugglers use cars to move cigarettes from Togo's seaports to Benin or Niger, eventually reaching Nigeria. Aflao, on the Ghana–Togo border, has recorded the highest rate of illicit cigarette sales, with over half sourced from Togo.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging in Togo continues to degrade forested areas, including mangroves and valuable hardwood species. Less than a tenth of the country's land is still forested, with demand for firewood and charcoal driving deforestation, as the vast majority of households in the country rely on wood for cooking. Illegal rosewood exploitation, fuelled by Chinese demand, involves local complicity and corruption to transform logs into timber in order to evade law enforcement. Togo also functions as a transit hub for timber smuggling from Ghana to Asia. The illicit timber trade supports armed groups, exacerbating instability. While recent initiatives have aimed to combat flora crime, environmental degradation and illegal activities persist.

Togo has emerged as a key source and transit hub for illegal wildlife trafficking, driven by weak law enforcement, economic challenges and the presence of international criminal networks. Wildlife products, including ivory, turtle meat, pangolins and other exotic species, are trafficked to Asia and elsewhere. Traffickers exploit porous borders and corrupt officials, while local communities participate due to dwindling fish stocks and economic hardship. Recent seizures include monkeys from Congo, rare birds from Brazil and elephant tusks from Ghana, highlighting Togo's role in global fauna trafficking routes. The trade also finances other organized criminal activities.

Additionally, Togo operates as a transit and trading hub for illicit minerals and non-renewable resources in West Africa, particularly linked to Burkina Faso. Despite indications of a shift, illicit flows of mercury for use within the artisanal gold sector in the Sahel have continued, along with gold flows in the opposite direction. Much of the gold smuggled into Togo and exported through Lomé International Airport is un- or under-declared. A key driver of cross-border smuggling activity is the wide disparity in the region's tax regimes. In addition to gold, there is a significant illicit cross-border fuel trade in Togo due to price disparities, and porous borders with Ghana and Benin. As a result, fuel is often smuggled into Togo from these two countries (with much of the fuel from Benin originating in Nigeria). However, in the country's northernmost Savanes region, government restrictions on the sale of adulterated fuel in jerrycans – imposed under a state of emergency due to violent extremist activity and evidence suggesting that fuel was a source of supply to armed groups – has led to a reduction in the amount of contraband fuel entering Togo from Benin in the north.

DRUGS

In line with regional trends, Togo's role as a significant transit point for cocaine trafficking is expanding. This is due to its strategic location between expanding cocaine production in Latin America and surging consumer markets in Europe, as well as its large deep-water seaport, the Port of Lomé. Most cocaine shipments are containerized, concealed among licit goods. However, cocaine flows through the port are rarely intercepted, and if they are, are rarely reported. Togo also has a small domestic cocaine market, predominantly affecting young people.

Togo serves as a transit and destination point for the cannabis trade, driven by well-established trafficking networks in the region. While cannabis is not a major export crop, Togo lies along evolving trafficking routes in West Africa, where cannabis – along with cocaine, opiates and synthetic drugs – moves across borders. Cannabis sourced from Ghana is smuggled through the Port of Lomé and distributed locally or to other countries in the region and beyond, including Niger, Benin and Lebanon. Decreasing prices make the drug increasingly accessible to young people, with small quantities sold openly in urban areas. Although drug seizures have increased recently, inconsistent reporting and a lack of transparency make it difficult to gauge the scope of the illicit market.

Synthetic drugs, including methamphetamines, Tramadol and diazepam, are widely consumed in Togo, particularly among workers. Criminal networks increasingly target vulnerable groups, such as drivers and students, marketing drugs disguised as candy or pills. Tramadol abuse is especially prevalent among teenagers and young adults. In addition, the country serves as a transit point, with China and India the primary sources for synthetic drugs. Tramadol from Pakistan is trafficked through Togo en route to Nigeria but there is evidence of criminal networks being involved in the domestic production of the drug as well. Corruption, including military involvement, facilitates the illicit market. Seizure data indicates a rise in synthetic drug volumes, highlighting persistent challenges in curbing distribution and consumption.

Small quantities of heroin from South Asia and Latin America transit through Togo on the way to Europe, with foreign nationals, particularly from Nigeria and Lebanon, involved in the trade. Although heroin volumes remain low, efforts continue to disrupt illicit networks amid suspected links between traffickers and senior state officials.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Reports on cyber-dependent crimes in Togo, including ransomware and hacking, remain sporadic, hindering accurate assessments of the market's scope. However, repeated cyber-attacks on banking systems highlight the country's vulnerability to evolving online threats, with cybercriminal activities estimated to cause some financial damage to the state. Official figures generally combine cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crimes, complicating efforts to isolate the latter.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Togo faces financial crime challenges, primarily in the form of tax evasion by private sector actors, including large foreign companies, which results in substantial revenue loss for the government. Embezzlement of public funds by state actors also contributes to economic harm. Ponzi schemes have defrauded Togolese investors of considerable sums, with promises of high returns from network marketing and cryptocurrency ventures proving deceptive. Cyber-enabled fraud is pervasive, encompassing romance scams, phishing and social engineering, targeting individuals and financial institutions. Law enforcement efforts have uncovered cyber fraud operations exploiting fake online profiles and prepaid card schemes linked to petroleum product sales.

Criminal actors

Local criminal networks engage in a diverse set of illegal activities, including smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal wildlife trading, human trafficking, arms trafficking and money laundering. These loosely organized groups often collaborate with larger transnational criminal organizations, leveraging cross-border alliances to expand their influence. Corruption and opaque governance structures enable criminal networks to maintain ties with state authorities, complicating efforts to distinguish between domestic and international criminal dynamics. International drug trafficking is primarily managed through extensive foreign networks, while local actors are heavily involved in the domestic distribution of drugs such as cannabis and synthetic drugs. Smaller groups are also engaged in armed robberies in the capital and the northern part of the country. As cyber criminality has increased in the past few years, so too has the number of criminal actors – including some organized networks – engaging in it. There is no evidence of the presence of local mafia-style criminal actors operating in Togo.

State-embedded actors in Togo are implicated in various forms of organized crime, including drug trafficking and money laundering. Law enforcement agencies and political elites use their positions to facilitate transnational criminal activities, exploiting porous borders and collaborating with foreign criminal actors. Corruption within state apparatuses, such as postal authorities and civil servants, enables the transit of illicit goods. Bribe payments at road checkpoints, in particular at national borders, is very common.

Foreign criminal networks have a significant influence on organized crime in Togo, exploiting systemic vulnerabilities to control key markets, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and illegal fishing. The Port of Lomé, as one of West Africa's largest container ports, is a strategic hub for transnational criminal activity, facilitating the distribution of counterfeit goods and synthetic drugs from Asia. Cannabis trafficking primarily involves networks linked to Ghana, which serves as the main source of cannabis imported into Togo. Additionally, foreign companies involved in legal industries, such as cement production, exploit regulatory loopholes to evade taxes, and maintain ties with political elites. These activities illustrate how Togo's combined offering of a strategic location and regulatory weaknesses enable the entrenchment of transnational criminal networks and their integration within local power structures. Finally, while not thought to be systematically or directly involved in the trafficking of illicit commodities, the violent extremist organization Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) is an important customer in various illicit trades, including fuel smuggling. It is possible that violent extremists are involved to some extent in the logistics of ensuring their ongoing supply of such goods. Furthermore, there have been incidents, albeit isolated, of suspected extremist groups attempting to steal cattle in northern Togo – a key means of armed group financing across much of West Africa.

Private sector actors play a central role in organized crime in Togo, engaging in fraud, tax evasion, money laundering and drug trafficking, particularly of synthetic drugs and cannabis. The trafficking of medical products is facilitated by people within the official health sector, including pharmacists, doctors, nurses and regulatory officials, blurring the line between legal and illegal supply chains. The Port of Lomé is a hub for drug and other goods shipments, with private operators exploiting regulatory loopholes to smuggle excisable goods to neighbouring countries. The port's management by private companies and lack of container oversight create systemic vulnerabilities that enable illicit trade. Poor administration and informality in the business environment exacerbate the risk of corruption and facilitate criminal activities.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Togo has made progress in governance and public administration, reflecting its increased political stability and more effective leadership. Despite these improvements, the concentration of executive power in the presidency, organized crime and corruption continue to undermine public trust, with persistent allegations of nepotism, embezzlement and collusion between political elites and criminal networks. Legislation to combat corruption is there, but it is insufficient to restore confidence fully. The electoral process is marred by doubts about its transparency and fairness, despite the work of institutions aimed at safeguarding democracy. The northernmost region of Togo faces instability from violent extremist groups operating there, which are involved in several illicit supply chains and exacerbate internal displacement and security concerns.

During the reporting period, efforts to combat corruption included the adoption of a national strategy and establishing oversight bodies to enhance transparency in public administration. E-payment systems and public procurement controls were introduced, alongside collaborations with international partners. However, there are still concerns over the independence of these oversight bodies, as most of its members are appointed by the president. Civil society involvement remains constrained by government influence and limited civil liberties. Although positive developments have been noted in international evaluations, including modest improvements in transparency ratings, insufficient resources and political interference continue to hinder progress. The absence of high-profile convictions under anti-corruption laws also raises some scepticism about how genuine the government is about reform.

Togo participates actively in regional security cooperation and has ratified numerous international instruments against organized crime and terrorism. Despite complying with frameworks like the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, practical implementation remains a challenge. Efforts include strengthening law enforcement capabilities and working with INTERPOL, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and other international agencies, particularly on countering drug trafficking. Togo has also engaged in multilateral cybercrime initiatives and partnered with global entities to combat tax evasion, focusing on international tax verification and data use. Hosting the OECD Francophone Academy underscored Togo's role as a regional training hub for preventing financial crime, focusing on VAT fraud investigations.

Togo has made significant strides by strengthening its legal framework to address traditional and emerging threats from organized crime. National legislation primarily targets trafficking and corruption, while recent measures focus on arms trafficking through enhanced regulation and tracing mechanisms. The government has processed a significant number of arms tracing cases and collected and destroyed numerous illegal weapons. Additionally, Togo has introduced measures against counterfeiting and cybercrime, establishing a cybersecurity centre in collaboration with international partners. Environmental crime is addressed through a national wildlife crime strategy. More recently, the country has stepped up its efforts to combat flora crime and adopted a national action plan. The Togolese authorities have introduced national policies restricting the sale of fuel in jerrycans to combat fuel smuggling. Consistent enforcement has led to a significant reduction in contraband fuel entering Togo. However, this has also resulted in the displacement of smuggling activities toward neighbouring countries. Despite progress, challenges remain in effectively implementing legal provisions, as regulatory enforcement and law enforcement capabilities require further improvement.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Togo has implemented legal reforms to modernize its judicial system and address organized crime, including a new draft code of criminal procedure targeting terrorism and maritime piracy. These measures aim to align the justice system with international standards and enhance procedural efficiency. However, executive interference continues to undermine judicial independence, with instances of biased proceedings and judicial appointments. Anti-government protests are frequently met with disproportionate legal responses, raising concerns about due process. Prisons remain overcrowded and under resourced, with corruption among staff contributing to inadequate healthcare and food. Lenient sentencing and opaque release practices perpetuate a sense of impunity for organized crime actors.

Togolese law enforcement bodies have enhanced cross-border cooperation against organized crime through the establishment of a national police information centre, facilitating data collection and exchange through INTERPOL. Togo participates in regional security initiatives, including direct information exchange among West African policing agencies and collaborations targeting terrorism and its financing. Despite these efforts, corruption and complicity within law enforcement undermines its effectiveness. Impunity also persists among security forces. Human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, and restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly and association, remain prevalent. Inadequate training and officials' involvement in human trafficking further hinder law enforcement capabilities.

Togo's strategic location on the West African coast and porous borders make it vulnerable to organized crime and trafficking, exacerbated by its proximity to major trafficking routes. Limited border control capacity and perceived corruption among officials facilitate the movement of illicit goods, including arms and counterfeit products. Trade and transport infrastructure, such as ports and border crossings, are particularly susceptible to criminal influence. Despite implementing security measures during the reporting period, including an extended state of emergency in the north to combat armed and terrorist violence, challenges persist. Between 2022 and 2024, JNIM strategically expanded its presence in certain parts of Togo, with a notable rise in attacks that threatened the country's border security and political stability. In response, the government launched the Programme d'urgence pour les Savanes, combining military and development initiatives to counter the threat. However, corruption within law enforcement and technological vulnerabilities further complicate efforts to counter organized crime, highlighting persistent governance and security issues.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing measures have been strengthened by enhancing institutional frameworks and raising awareness among financial institutions about their reporting obligations. The financial intelligence unit analyzes suspicious transactions and forwards substantiated intelligence to the public prosecutor for judicial action. Despite improvements in report quality and volume, there are still gaps in enforcement gaps, particularly in the dearth of dedicated police units, specialized courts and asset seizure capabilities. The proliferation of mobile money services, while promoting financial inclusion, has increased vulnerability to criminal exploitation due to inadequate identity verification. Moreover, crowdfunding and online gambling are key risks which have not yet been addressed. Efforts to consolidate a robust, risk-based approach are ongoing amid persistent enforcement challenges.

Togo has undertaken a series of economic reforms, including restructuring its key sectors, digitizing processes and harmonizing business law. Efforts have been made to divest public enterprises and regulate competition, yet the business environment remains inefficient, with significant informal activity and persistent political interference in the judiciary. Regulatory improvements made company and property registration easier, but the overall administration remains weak, fostering corruption and informal economic practices. Organized crime risks persist in vulnerable economic sectors, including illicit fishing and counterfeit goods. Limited private sector influence and regulatory gaps hinder progress, while economic freedom remains constrained despite some improvements to regulation and credit access.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support remain limited, with civil society organizations playing a significant role in providing support. While witness protection programmes exist, they face resource constraints and logistical issues. The ministry of social affairs operates a free hotline for reporting child abuse and trafficking crimes, but shelter availability for adults is limited, hindering investigations. The government did not equip the national anti-trafficking commission with necessary resources. Meanwhile, civil society efforts, including drug treatment facilities, also faced resource limitations. Victims of trafficking still face stigma and discrimination despite awareness campaigns, underscoring the need for enhanced victim support and collaboration.

The Togolese government has implemented a series of measures focusing on human trafficking, drug-related issues and corruption – including law enforcement training, improved border management and public awareness campaigns. A national commission was established to coordinate anti-trafficking actions, conduct awareness activities and address human trafficking concerns. As a result, the government has increased prosecutions, trained officials and collaborated with NGOs to reduce child trafficking risks. Anti-corruption efforts have also seen awareness campaigns and projects co-financed by international partners, forming part of a broader national strategy to improve financial governance and transparency.

Togo faces significant challenges in civil society and press freedom, which hinder its efforts to combat organized crime. While legal frameworks exist to support civil society organizations, overly restrictive regulations often undermine their autonomy by compelling them to align with government priorities. Non-state actors play a critical role in promoting government transparency and accountability, countering corruption by exposing opaque state tenders and reluctance to disclose assets. Journalists face violence, surveillance and legal harassment, including the use of spyware, which stifles media freedom. Media suppression intensified ahead of recent parliamentary elections, with arrests of journalists covering corruption and temporary closures of newspapers highlighting worsening press conditions.