



ECOWAS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO  
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# MISSION REPORT

ECOWAS Election Observation Mission (EOM) to the 2024 Legislative  
and Regional Elections in Togo

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ANC</b>	Alliance Nationale Pour Le Changement
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CACIT</b>	Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo
<b>CCJ</b>	ECOWAS Community Court of Justice
<b>CNDH</b>	Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme
<b>DAGL</b>	District Autonome de Grand Lomé ( <i>Greater Lomé District</i> )
<b>DMP</b>	Dynamique pour la Majorité du Peuple
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EMB</b>	Electoral Management Body
<b>EOM</b>	Election Observation Mission
<b>HOM</b>	Head of Mission
<b>NET</b>	Nouvel Engagement Togolais
<b>OIF</b>	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
<b>UFC</b>	Union des Forces du Changement
<b>UNIR</b>	Union pour la République

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The government of the Republic of Togo requested the support of the ECOWAS Commission to observe the conduct of its 2024 Legislative and Regional Elections (LARs) in the country in line with the provisions of Articles 12 – 14 of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001). These provisions mandate the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to provide assistance to member States conducting elections.

ECOWAS responded positively to the request and deployed a pre-electoral fact-finding mission to Togo from 15 – 20 April 2024 to assess the state of preparedness for the conduct of the elections and then submit a report. The mission acted accordingly and paved the way for a forty (40) member Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Togo from 26<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024, under the leadership of H.E. Fatoumata Jallow-Tambajang, and the support of the ECOWAS Resident Representative, H.E. Bacar Banjai BARROS and the Acting head of ECOWAS Electoral Assistance Division, Mr Serigne Mamadou Ka.

Other members of the EOM included representatives of West African institutions, including the ECOWAS Parliament, the Community Court of Justice (CCJ), the Permanent Representatives of the ECOWAS Council, Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), and independent election experts.

The EOM's mandate was to observe the conduct of Election Day processes, ensuring that they are consistent with international standards of democratic elections, namely free and fair.

On arrival in the country, the mission had a briefing session for the observers on ECOWAS Elections Guidelines to ensure compliance with the ethics of their work and deployment to the six (6) regions of Togo: namely, Maritime, Plateau, Central, Kara, and Savanes) and Greater Lome District (DAGL). This was followed by a comprehensive update on the security situation by a senior commander of the National Gendarmerie, detailing security measures to ensure democratic elections and special displacement arrangements for citizens living in the jihadists-prone north region.

The Head of Mission (HoM) then met with the Chairperson and members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) of Togo, the Heads of the International Election Observation Missions of the African Union (AU) and the Francophonie, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the President of the Republic to exchange views on the preparations for the polls.

At its meeting with the CENI, the Mission was assured of the deployment of adequate security around the country, training of polling officers, logistics, civic communication, and freedom of the press. In appreciating the meeting, the mission raised concern about CENI's continuation beyond the expiration of its mandate. The CENI admitted this as a constitutional challenge and indicated their plan to address it soon.

The head of the ECOWAS mission, accompanied by the ECOWAS Resident Representative, H.E. Bacar Banjai BARROS, was received in audience by the Head of State, President Faure Gnassingbe. The delegation raised issues relating to the electoral process with the Togolese President. It congratulated the Head of State on peacefully conducting the electoral process. The delegation also expressed its concerns regarding the reform of the CENI and the ability of electoral officials to work towards holding credible elections. The Head of State expressed his deep gratitude to the members of the delegation for their recommendations and assured them of the actions that would soon be taken to this end with the support of ECOWAS.

ECOWAS observers were then deployed in two-member teams across the six (6) regions of Togo (Maritime, Plateau, Central, Kara, and Savanes) and the Greater Lome District (DAGL).

On Election Day, the ECOWAS mission set up a Situation Room, responsible for maintaining contact with the various observer teams in the field and reporting their findings. After the polls, on 30 April 2024, ECOWAS, AU, and OIF EOMs jointly issued a Communique on the conduct of the polls.

## **2. Context Of The 2024 Legislative And Regional Elections**

In the run-up to the legislative elections, initially scheduled for December 2023, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) carried out a nationwide voter registration exercise from 29 April to 14 June 2023. At the end of this exercise, CENI asked the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) to conduct an external audit of the provisional voters' register to determine its conformity with internationally accepted standards. Following the OIF audit, the definitive Voters register comprised 4,203,711 registered voters, 53.82% women and 46.18% men.

In November 2023, a few weeks before the end of the legislature's legal term, some political parties expressed concern that the date of the legislative elections had not been set. Basing their argument on

the last paragraph of Article 52 of the Constitution, which stipulates that "outgoing members of the National Assembly and Senate, due to the end of their mandate or dissolution, remain in office until their successors take office", some supporters of the ruling party argued that there was no reason to worry about the delay in the electoral calendar. On 8 February 2024, the government finally set the date for legislative and regional elections on 13 April 2024. On 23 February 2024, at the request of some political actors, the President of the Republic postponed the elections to 20 April 2024.

Meanwhile, on the night of 25 March 2024, the Togolese Parliament passed a new Constitution designed to move the country from a presidential to a parliamentary system of government. Under the new Constitution, Parliament will elect a ceremonial President of the Republic without any executive powers. In contrast, executive power will reside in the hands of the **Chairman of the Council of Ministers** (or Prime Minister), the leader of the majority party in Parliament. The new Constitution also sets the term of office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers to six years without specifying whether there are limits to the number of times it can be renewed. This reform is still vigorously contested by the opposition and civil society, who consider it a manoeuvre by the President of the Republic to maintain his grip on power indefinitely. On 3 April 2024, after more than a week of contestations, the government once again postponed the legislative and regional elections. The President then asked Parliament to make a second reading of the draft constitutional bill. However, the government reissued a decree on 9<sup>th</sup> April 24, setting the new date for the Legislative and Regional Elections on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

### **3. [Findings of Election Observers:](#)**

On Election Day, twenty-two (22) ECOWAS observer teams visited two hundred and forty-two (242) polling stations across the country and made the following observations:

#### **3.1: [Opening of the Polls:](#)**

Voting generally commenced within the first hour, between 7:00 am and 7:40 am. However, polling commenced significantly late at two polling stations, namely, Lycée de Tokoin (in Lomé) and EPC Eyadema (in the Oti Prefecture, Savanes Region). In the first case, the polling station opened at around 8:19 a.m. because there was no indelible ink to mark voters, while in the second case, voting materials were not available at opening time. In most places visited, polling staff were easily identifiable by their branded aprons. Only one observer team at EPP Niamadi (in the Zio Prefecture, Maritime Region)

observed polling staff who didn't wear their branded aprons. In most polling centres, three (3) and four (4) security guards were present.

### 3.2: The Voting Process:

The ECOWAS Observer Mission (EOM) noted that polling stations were generally set up in such a way as to guarantee the secrecy of the vote, with polling booths well positioned to enable voters to make their choice in complete secrecy. Voters were systematically required to show their voter's card before casting their ballot to ensure validity, and after voting, they dipped their fingers in indelible ink. Whilst domestic observers were not always present at the polling stations visited, observers from CACIT, CCDD, CNDH, NJPP, the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court were spotted in some polling centres. Similarly, party agents were not always present at the polling stations visited. The few whom the observer teams came across were mainly agents of UNIR, DMP, UFC and ANC, and to a lesser extent, agents of MPL, ADDI, PSR, Arc-en-Ciel, NET and Bon Berger.

### 3.3: Closing of the Polls And Vote-Counting:

At closing time, the ECOWAS Observer Mission (EOM) noted that most polling stations closed on time, between 4:00 pm and 4:08 pm, even at EPC Eyadema (Oti Prefecture), where voting started late due to the late arrival of voting materials. This was mainly because no voters were in the queues waiting to vote at closing time.

At the closing of the polls, the polling staff counted the votes at the polling stations in the presence of party agents and EOWAS observers. However, observers noticed that many polling staff in the polling stations lacked mastery of the vote-counting and tallying procedures, particularly distinguishing between blank and invalid votes. They also observed that results sheets were not systematically pasted at the polling stations, as directed by CENI.

## **4. Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Based on the foregoing, and in line with its mandate to observe the conduct of Election Day processes, the ECOWAS Observer Mission (EOM) concluded that in its practical implementation, the conduct of the 2024 Legislative and Regional elections in the Togolese Republic significantly gave effect to the rights of citizens to participate in the decisions of their leaders freely. Notably, the conduct of the polls upheld

citizens' rights to freedom of movement, security of the person, equality between men and women, equal suffrage, and secrecy of the ballot.

Given some of the lapses presented in this report, the mission made the following recommendations to help the government and stakeholders to avoid shortfalls in the future:

#### To The Electoral Management Board:

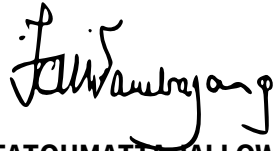
- Explore ECOWAS support for an independent and critical assessment and capacity-building of the mandate of the CENI.
- Ensure the review and adopt the mandate of the CENI with the support of ECOWAS.
- Consider presenting voter registration data in a gender-disaggregated manner, including metrics such as sex, age group, location/region, etc. Such information would help political parties/candidates determine the most appropriate method of reaching voters and help policymakers draw valuable inferences for policy planning.
- Conduct extensive voter education and sensitization of the public on such changes in order to avoid situations where voters are not able to locate their polling station on Election Day.
- Establish minimum academic qualification standards for the recruitment of competent polling staff to enable them to master the processing and computation of election results.
- Train polling staff to ensure effective assimilation of Election Day procedures.
- Ensure the wearing of proper identification tags and/or aprons to ensure identification and transparency.
- Establish accessible location of polling stations to ease voting of the elderly and people with physical disability.

#### To Political Parties:

- Promote greater participation of women and youth in politics and governance in public and private sectors in order to move them from just serving to mobilize party supporters and voting. With women representing 53.82% of the electorate and their contributions to development, their greater involvement in decision-making can help contribute to inclusive governance and the advancement of the country's development.



- Increase financial resources to recruit and train party agents, ensuring adequate representation at the polling stations and safeguarding results.



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