

Togo

Rice

In 1960, Togo peacefully gained its independence from France. Leadership passed to Sylvanus Olympio, who had been elected President in an unsupervised general election in 1958. Olympio was a member of the Togolese Unity Party (CUT), and established himself as a personalist leader. In 1963, Olympio was assassinated by dissatisfied noncommissioned officers. He was replaced by the former Prime Minister (who had fled into exile to avoid arrest during Olympio's regime), Nicholas Grunitzky, a member of the Togolese Party of Progress (PTP). Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (2014) suggest that Grunitzky was put in place by the military and they code the beginning of a new personalist regime that lasts through the end of our observation period.¹ Thus, this is a SOLS change. Grunitzky was in office until 1966, when he was removed by the military. Initially, Kléber Dadjo, a member of the military, served as the interim leader of the country as the Chairman of the National Reconciliation Committee. Later that year, Lt. Col. Etienne Eyadema (later known as General Gnassingbe Eyadema), the leader of the coup, was named President. According to Geddes et al. 2014, Grunitzky and Eyadema are part of the same personalist regime so we code no SOLS change here. Eyadema would later change his affiliation to the Rally of the Togolese People (RPT), a party of his creation. In 1969 Eyadéma's SOLS changes from Mil to RPT (Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais).

Eyadema remained President until his death in 2005. The military then named Eyadema's son, Faure Gnassingbe, to be the next President. This is not a SOLS change. As this was technically an unconstitutional act, the move was condemned by African leaders and led to sanctions by the African Union and ECOWAS. Gnassingbe stepped down from office on 25 February 2005, and was briefly replaced by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Abass Bonfoh, until elections could be held (Bonfoh is classified as an interim leader, and so there is no SOLS change). Elections were held in April 2005, which elected Gnassingbe officially as President, though there are charges of widespread vote tampering. Gnassingbe remains in office in the present day.

References

- Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2014. New Data on Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions. Version 1.2 June 2014. <http://sites.psu.edu/dictators/>
- United States Department of State. "Country Background Note: Togo". Last edited 1 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5430.htm>

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¹ Geddes, Wright, and Frank discuss this coding decision in the "updates" file that is part of their data folder.

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