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**UN Human Rights Council  
Thirty-fourth session, 27 February – 24 March 2017**

**Item 6:  
Consideration of UPR reports**

**TOGO**

Mr. President,

Amnesty International has consistently raised concerns with the Togolese authorities that law enforcement officials use excessive force against peaceful demonstrators and torture and other ill-treatment against arrested or detained persons. On 28 February 2017, for example, the army used live ammunition to disperse a spontaneous protest against the rise in petroleum prices in Lomé, killing one person and wounding several others. We welcome Togo's commitment to take the necessary steps to prevent torture and other human rights violations by law enforcement officials<sup>1</sup> and ensure adequate investigation and prosecution of those suspected of being responsible for these violations.<sup>2</sup> Togo accepted similar recommendations during its first UPR in 2011.<sup>3</sup> As the death toll rises, we call on Togo to take concrete steps towards their immediate implementation.

Amnesty International also welcomes the Togolese authorities' acceptance of general recommendations to protect freedom of expression.<sup>4</sup> However, these commitments ring hollow in light of Togo's rejection of more specific and measurable recommendations to create an enabling space for human rights defenders and

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Togo*, A/HRC/34/4, recommendations 128.68 (Netherlands), 128.21 and 128.69 (Serbia), 128.71 (South Korea), 128.97 (Uruguay), 129.24 (Canada).

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/34/4, recommendations 128.82 (Belgium), 128.83 (United Kingdom), 128.84 (Netherlands), 128.88 (Ghana), 128.90 (Guatemala), 128.93 (France), 128.96 (United States of America), 129.19 (Mexico).

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Togo*, A/HRC/19/10, 14 December 2011, recommendations 100.19 (United States of America), 100.21 (France), 100.23 (Benin), 100.48 (Morocco), 100.49 (Sweden), 100.50 (Slovenia), 100.51 (Slovakia), 100.53 (Chile), 101.5 (Norway), 101.6 (Germany),

<sup>4</sup> A/HRC/34/4, recommendations 128.85 (Liechtenstein), 128.98 (Brazil), 129.22 (Australia).

journalists, including by revising laws used to crackdown on dissent.<sup>5</sup> The authorities continue arbitrarily to curtail freedom of expression. This creates a climate of self-censorship and discourages civil society from speaking out about abuses and lack of accountability.

On 6 February, the High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication (HAAC) withdrew the frequencies of radio station *CityFM* and TV station *La Chaîne du Futur* for breaching licensing rules. The HAAC statute does not provide for any appeal mechanism. This action should be reserved only for the most serious breaches. It should also be ordered by an independent court of law not an administrative body.

On 7 February, journalist Robert Kossi Avotor was documenting an eviction in Lomé, when gendarmes told him to stop taking photographs. He was beaten with batons. He was handcuffed with his hands behind his back, and no attention was paid when he indicated the cuffs were too tight. When he asked to urinate, he was told his genitals would be beaten. The gendarmes detained him for three hours and his photographs were deleted. He was then released without charge. The next day he filed a complaint and, since then, has been receiving calls from members of the security forces advising him to drop his complaint.

Amnesty International calls on Togo to protect journalists and human rights defenders, including by amending legislation to ensure it protects the right to freedom of expression.

Amnesty International is disappointed by Togo's decision to reject all recommendations to protect LGBTI persons and to investigate allegations of attacks and bring perpetrators to justice.<sup>6</sup> We call on Togo to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including by revising the Criminal Code and ensuring LGBTIs are protected against violence.

Thank you, Mr. President,

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<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Togo*, A/HRC/WG.6/26/L.1, 16 November 2016, recommendations 131.19 and 131.20 (Canada), 131.21 (Germany), 131.22 (Switzerland).

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Togo*, A/HRC/WG.6/26/L.1, 16 November 2016, recommendations 131.8 (Australia), 131.9 (Chile), 131.10 (Mexico), 131.11 (France), 131.12 (Slovenia), 131.13 (Spain), 131.14 (Uruguay), 131.15 (Uruguay), 131.16 (Argentina), 131.17 (Belgium), 131.18 (Brazil), 131.19 (Canada).