



## Togo 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Fraud; Carjacking; Maritime; Riots/Civil Unrest; Floods; Employee Health Safety; Disease Outbreak; Hate Crimes; Drug Trafficking; Financial Security

Africa > Togo; Africa > Togo > Lome

5/2/2016

### Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Critical

### Crime Threats

A majority of the crimes are crimes of opportunity (petty theft, residential/commercial burglaries, snatch-and-run theft of purses/bags).

In recent years, Togo has seen high levels of violent crime, including the use of machetes/knives, firearms, and makeshift weapons, and the use of ruses or trickery to lure in a victim. Foreigners are targeted for robbery. There have been sophisticated armed robberies, often committed by organized transnational criminal groups. Criminals themselves are sometimes targeted for vigilante justice or lynching.

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There are incidents of carjackings and other violent crime on the roads. Theft while riding in taxis is common, as thieves steal bags, wallets, and passports.

Crime at the public beaches includes thefts and robberies, and foreigners are targeted quickly, even at daytime. Pickpocketing incidents and theft are common, especially along the beach and in the market areas of Lomé.

Residential and business burglaries are frequent in Lomé.

#### Other Areas of Concern

The Embassy has no official off-limits areas for official Americans; however, they are strongly encouraged to avoid the public beaches due to crime and safety concerns. You should avoid beaches where no security is provided, even during daylight hours, as purse-snatchings and muggings occur regularly.

You should avoid certain areas within Lomé at night, including public beaches, Boulevard du Mono (i.e., the "beach road"), and the Ghana-Togo border areas. Before traveling outside of Lomé, check with the Consular Section or the RSO for the latest travel advisories.

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We recommend that you not visit the Grand Marché area alone during the day and avoid the area in the evenings.

## Transportation-Safety Situation

### Road Safety and Road Conditions

Driving conditions are hazardous due to the presence of pedestrians and motorcycles (which often disregard traffic laws), disorderly drivers, livestock on the roadways, and the poor condition of the roads, which often contain deep potholes. Drivers should be prepared for other drivers to run red lights or stop signs, drive in the wrong direction on roads and one-way streets, and disregard lanes.

Road conditions in Lomé are OK but deteriorate quickly as you leave the city. Driving outside of Lomé after dark is prohibited for official Americans and only approved on a case-by-case basis.

### Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation taxis and motorcycle taxis remain a significant safety concern. Public transportation is unreliable, the vehicles used are typically old and not well maintained, and traffic laws are not followed. Do not share taxicabs with strangers. When using taxis, negotiate

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before you get in and insist that the driver not stop for additional passengers. Motorcycles and motorcycle taxis have a significantly higher accident, injury, and mortality rate. Official Americans are not explicitly prohibited from using public transportation and taxis but are strongly encouraged to avoid them due to safety and crime concerns.

There are no passenger trains in Togo.

#### Aviation/Airport Conditions

Although limited, airline travel is largely reliable, and the security measures to screen passengers at the airport are satisfactory. The only international airport in Togo is in Lomé. A new terminal has been built, and a grand opening is anticipated in 2016. As there is no direct commercial air service to the U.S. by carriers registered in Togo, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed the government's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards.

#### Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

#### Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

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After the terrorist attacks in the region in late 2015 and early 2016, the government has taken proactive steps to secure soft targets and the infrastructure. This more visible role in security is meant to reassure businesses that the government is taking active steps to ensure their safety. However, government security resources are limited, and there is little counter-terrorism experience in Togo. Togo has extremely porous borders and a limited capability to detect or intercept terrorists entering the country or a home-grown extremist.

#### Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

Togo is pro-America, and the government remains willing to cooperate with and support requests from the U.S. Embassy.

#### **Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence**

Post Political Violence Rating: High

#### Civil Unrest

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Demonstrations, strikes, marches, and public protests are common and unpredictable. They often lead to conflict/violence, including burning vehicles and other objects, stone throwing, and the use of tear gas and other crowd control techniques. Protests in Mango in late 2015 led to the death of a law enforcement officer and several protestors.

## **Post-specific Concerns**

### **Environmental Hazards:**

Togo is vulnerable to floods that have enormous destructive potential to the population, society, environment, and the economy.

### **Critical Infrastructure Concerns:**

There are relatively few serious environmental hazards, such as localized industrial fires, chemical spills, the possibility of a hazardous material leak at the port of Lomé, fuel/oil spills at nearby factories in the industrial park and/or due to transportation of petroleum products and other chemicals overland. Overall, these types of hazards/risks are relatively low.

Although Togo's economy is developing by instituting business reforms, improving its health care and educational systems, and making significant new investments in infrastructure a

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significant amount of work remains to be done. Electricity, running water, and telephone services are not always reliable in some parts of the country.

#### Privacy Concerns:

In general, foreigners will receive a fair amount of unwanted attention in Togo.

#### Personnel-Background Concerns

Hate-related crimes rarely occur, though some U.S. citizens have reported being the target of comments or actions because of their nationality or race. For same-sex partners, consensual same-sex sexual relations are criminalized. Penalties include fines and up to three years in prison. For more detailed information about LGBT rights in Togo, review the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

#### Drug-related Crimes

In general, there are not many drug-related, violent crimes. The transiting of narcotics from Brazil to Togo has been hindered by authorities stopping direct flights from Brazil to Togo; however, narcotics and counterfeit pharmaceuticals are still being trafficked into Togo. Lomé's international airport is being used as a hub by drug traffickers bringing drugs into the region

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for transport to other parts of Africa.

## Kidnapping Threat

General caution against kidnappings should be exercised in Togo by maintaining a high level of awareness, protecting personal information, and using trusted forms of transportation.

## Police Response

Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different from our own. Persons violating Togo's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. If you break local laws, your U.S. passport will not help you avoid arrest or prosecution. There are also some things that might be legal in Togo but are still illegal in the U.S.

One should always be respectful and avoid confrontation when interacting with the police.

## How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment:

If you are arrested and imprisoned, inform the authorities that you are a U.S. citizen and ask to contact the U.S. Embassy so that the Embassy is aware that you have been imprisoned

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and can render the necessary American citizens' services. For emergency consular assistance, U.S. citizens may reach the U.S. Embassy at +(228) 22-61-54-70

#### Crime Victim Assistance:

The local emergency line is 117. The Consular Section's American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit can provide standard consular services for U.S. citizens, including services for those who are arrested and detained.

Police Contact Information: (Country Code 228)

Emergency (Togo-wide):

Police - 117

Gendarmerie - 172

Fire Brigade – 118

Kpalime Police: 2441 0053 Gendarmerie: 2441 0108 or 2441 0104

Kara Police: 2660 6052 Gendarmerie: 2660 6281 or 2660 6161

Atakpame Police: 2440 0101 or 2440 0123 Gendarmerie: 2440 0388 or 2440 0475

Sokode Police: 2550 0043 Gendarmerie: 2550 0090

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Dapaong Police: 2770 8031 or 2770 0032 Gendarmerie: 2770 8413

## Police/Security Agencies

Policing is based on the French system. There is a national gendarmerie, which is part of the armed forces and is directed by the Minister of Defense; a national police force under the authority of the Minister of Interior Security and Civil Protection; and the police of Lomé, responsible for policing the neighborhoods of the capital. All units play a role and share loosely defined responsibilities for internal security of the country, and police and gendarmes often work together. Military personnel are sometimes assigned to work in or with police and gendarme personnel for security matters.

Vetting of prospective employees can be completed with a criminal check and a visit to a local police station. There are several contract security companies in Lomé. Most companies offer 24-hour response capability, alarm systems, static guards, and mobile patrols. All private security guards are unarmed. Some companies will bring police as part of their response protocol. Among the more established and reputable security companies are: Inter-Con Security Systems, American Eagle Security, VLC, Development and Security Systems, and Agiris. Training, experience, and organizational levels vary widely amongst security companies and guard contracts.

## Medical Emergencies

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Medical facilities are limited and of very poor quality; emergency medical care is inadequate. Medical care is substandard. Medical services are not up to American standards. Patients may encounter shortages of routine medications and supplies and counterfeit medications are a frequent problem. Emergency medical services (fire/ambulance response) are extremely limited in response time, resources, and capacity. Emergency transport is often carried out by taxis and motorcycles, and payment is sometimes necessary before transport can occur.

Credit cards are not an acceptable form of payment for medical services. Medical care and medicine typically require advance payment in cash.

#### Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

The U.S. Embassy maintains a list of English-speaking doctors at:  
[http://togo.usembassy.gov/other\\_services.html](http://togo.usembassy.gov/other_services.html).

(Country Code 228)

Lomé

St. Josephs Clinic in Lomé: 2226 9442/ 2226 9443 or 2226 7232

Tokoin Hopital: 2221 2501 or 2221 4348. Pleased NOTE- Avoid this gov't hospital in emergency if at all possible.

Polyclinelle: 2250 3989

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Mango

Hospital of Hope: 9310 3738

Kpalime

Bethesda Hospital: 2335 6098 or 9056 6236

Adeta Baptist Mission Hospital: 2449 7026 or 2449 7009

Sokode

Clinique Du Parc: 2251 0380 or 9003 7829

Dapaong

Clinic Win'pand: 2770 8853/2770 8854 or 9004 5361

Tsiko

Hospital Baptiste Biblique: 2449 7026/2449 7027

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

A detailed list of U.S. Department of State recommended Air Ambulance/MedEvac/Medical Escort Providers can be found at:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/health/evacuation.html>

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## Recommended Insurance Posture

It is also advisable to have medical evacuation insurance in case of emergency. It is recommended that you review your health insurance plan to determine what medical services it would cover in Togo and consider purchasing travel health and medical evacuation insurance. All travelers should have adequate evacuation coverage. In case of medical emergency, most Embassy personnel are evacuated to South Africa, the United Kingdom, or other Western European locations.

## Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

The Centers for Disease Control website has a complete list of recommended vaccinations for travel to the region. HIV/AIDS and malaria are prevalent. All visitors are advised to take malaria prophylaxis. Information regarding country-specific vaccinations and health guidance for Togo can be found at CDC's website:  
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/togo>

## OSAC Country Council Information

Post recently started an OSAC Country Council program. Contact RSO Brendan McCaughey (McCaugheyBE@state.gov). To reach OSAC's Africa team, please email

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OSACAF@state.gov.

## **U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information**

### Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

U.S. Embassy Lomé (M-TH: 0730-1700, Fr: 0730-1230)

4332 Boulevard Eyadema,

Cité OUA, B.P. 852

Lomé, Togo

### Embassy Contact Numbers

Phone Operator: +(228) 22-61-54-70

Emergency After-Hours: +(228) 22-61-54-70

Marine Post 1: +(228) 22-61-54-70 ext. 4403

Regional Security Office: +(228) 22-61-54-70 ext. 4467 or 4468

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Website: <http://togo.usembassy.gov/>

## Embassy Guidance

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information for Togo. We strongly recommend travelers enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step/> prior to arrival to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

## Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

### Scams

Cyber crimes and fake payoff or fake investment, so-called "419" scams, continue to be a concern. Perpetrators of business fraud often target foreigners, including U.S. citizens. Formerly associated with Nigeria, these fraud schemes are now prevalent throughout western Africa, including Togo, and pose dangers of both financial loss and physical harm. An increasing number of U.S. citizens have been targets of such scams, resulting in the loss of considerable money. Typically, these scam operations begin with an unsolicited communication, usually by e-mail or Facebook, from an unknown individual who describes a situation that promises quick financial gain, often by assisting in the transfer of a large sum of

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money or valuables out of the country. As a general rule, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Other common e-mail scams involve an individual claiming to be a U.S. citizen who is “trapped” in Togo and needs financial assistance to return to the U.S. or receive urgent medical care.

More sophisticated scams include targeting U.S. businesses and ordering a large amount of their product contingent on the U.S. business providing banking information or paying legal fees.

Please refer to the fraud warning on the Embassy’s website:  
<http://togo.usembassy.gov/webwarn.html> and  
[http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1198.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1198.html).

## Situational Awareness Best Practices

Maintain a low profile. Vary times and routes to/from work. Do not do anything that draws unwanted attention. Do not flash money or wear conspicuous jewelry. When going out, carry only what you need. You should be aware of your surroundings and the people present when coming and going from hotels, offices, banks, and residences. Patronize well-established restaurants and venues, avoid walking alone at night, travel in groups whenever possible, and avoid walking down any dark alleys. You should closely monitor your surroundings when

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using ATMs because of petty theft during and after ATM usage. You should only use ATMs during the day and choose ATMs with many people and guards around if possible.

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