



# UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

**Update n° 1.1 on the situation in Togo and on its consequences  
in Bénin and in Ghana  
(28 April 2005 – 8:00 am)**

## 1. TOGO

- On 26 April, soon after the local television announced the results of the presidential elections (60% in favor of Faure Gnassingbé), crowds of angry youths were seen into the streets in some areas of the capital Lomé waving machetes and hurling stones. Barricades were thrown up across major arteries and a heavy pall of black smoke hung over the city as protesters set fire to tires. Apparently **20 people were killed** since the results of the elections were made public and nearly 100 people were wounded (90% due to bullets). ICRC has managed to send emergency medical supplies to the main hospitals in Lomé. The situation remained tense on 27 April. According to ICRC, Lomé looks like a “**dead city**”. The streets in some parts of the city are still occupied by young opponents armed with sticks and stones.
- Some violent incidents have been reported in other cities and villages (between the local populations and the army).
- **ECOWAS’** observers have declared that the results of the elections were acceptable in spite of minor incidents. Before the results of the elections were known, President **Obasanjo**, as chairman of the AU, obtained an agreement between Faure Gnassingbé and Gilchrist Olympio, charismatic leader of the opposition, to jointly set up a Government of National Unity. This agreement was immediately denounced by Gilchrist Olympio upon his return from Abuja.
- **On Wednesday, Emmanuel Bob-Akitani, candidate of the coalition of the opposition self-proclaimed elected as president and called for resistance against the ruling power.**
- **The borders with Ghana and Bénin are closed since Friday 22 April 2005.**
- We were informed that UNSECOORD was considering to move from phase 3 to phase 4.
- UNHCR Cotonou is in contact with the UN Resident Coordinator in Lomé on the issue of possible **internal displacements** within Togo. UNHCR will contribute to address this possible situation with the inter-agency collaborative approach.

## 2. BENIN

- **Overnight more than two thousand people have crossed to Hillacondji of whom, 840 women, 515 Men and 1825 children, bringing the cumulative total to 3623 persons arrived in Bénin since last Tuesday. 543 have been transferred to Come. The remaining refugees will be attended to today by a strong multisectorial and interagency team which has been deployed to Hillacondji.** According to different

local sources, more are on their way to Bénin. They have been taken care by Caritas (UNHCR Implementing Partner) and by the Red Cross.

- Sites where refugees could be received and assisted have been identified in Comé and Lokossa. Some of these sites are being cleared and minimum infrastructures are being installed or rehabilitated (warehouses, sanitation and water).
- In the **Come** Camp water and sanitation are available, aspects related to gender and age are at the forefront of our operations and all actors have been trained before hand on the subject. UNHCR Cotonou is working closely with UNICEF on children and unaccompanied minors.
- **Athieme:** Out of the 100 people, who arrived on Tuesday, only 19 have remained; the others have joined either families or preferred to go elsewhere; but not back home as violence near the border continues unabated.
- Our office in Cotonou has been authorized to spend up to USD 30,000 from an existing project to cover some preparedness activities and for the initial and immediate response.
- With the financial support from Emergency and Security Service (ESS), **NFIs for 2500 persons** have been pre-positioned in Bénin while the Accra emergency stockpile is on alert (with a capacity to meet the needs of 50,000 persons). Authorizations are being sought for a speedy transit of any humanitarian goods via Burkina Faso if the Togolese borders remain closed.
- **Communications equipments** for the Office in Benin are being purchased and dispatched (ESS/Emergency Preparedness and Response Section funding).
- One **Emergency Preparedness Response Officer (EPRO)** was deployed to Bénin one week before the elections in support of the UNHCR Regional Office.
- One **Emergency Response Team** (three staff – protection, programme and community services) is being dispatched in cooperation with ESS. A second team is on standby and could be deployed over the week-end.
- The regional PI officer (based in Abidjan) is being deployed to Bénin and will be in Cotonou on Friday 29 April.
- **Inter-agency contingency plans**, re-activated by UNHCR in February 2005 following the death of President Eyadéma, have been regularly updated.
- WFP has confirmed the availability of food to meet the immediate needs of the potential refugees.
- **Coordination mechanisms** with partners (UN, Governments and NGOs) have been activated and are led by UNHCR.

### 3. GHANA

- **327 Togolese asylum seekers have crossed the Togo/Ghana border (although it is still officially closed) since Tuesday 26 April 2005.** In addition to the 106 Togolese and 65 Ghanaian citizens who crossed the border from Togo into the Kejebi area (north of Jasikan) on Tuesday 26 April, 221 Togolese have arrived in the same district on Wednesday 27 April. They are being settled on a temporary basis in schools at Todome, Adakope and Awudome. The asylum-seekers claim they fled into Ghana because of attacks by security forces. BO Accra just received reports of Togolese security forces along unapproved routes close to the Aflao

border post having shot and wounded 3 Ghanaians. The gun shots were apparently aimed at some Togolose citizens who had gathered on the Ghana side of the border insulting them to have been part of the Faure Gnassingbe electoral fraud. The victims are receiving treatment at the Aflao hospital. The Togolese who provoked the action escaped unhurt.

- In **Dzodze district**, arrivals are reported at Penyi, close to the Akanu border post near Dzodze. One report indicates some 25 persons, while another report alleges the arrival of some 100. According to reliable sources, more Togolese are stranded behind the Togolese border trying to cross into Ghana as they are of the view that entry through unapproved routes is very dangerous.
- Initial reports were received by our office in Accra about a smaller - though yet undetermined - number of arrivals who crossed from the Togolese village of Ahamasu into the **Akatsi/ Keta area**. They state that they left because of the general insecurity. According to tentative information, it appears that most of them do not intend to stay as they were fleeing the general insecurity and that they wish to return as soon as 'things settle.
- Further reports indicate that 2 police officers and 2 soldiers were chased from the Togolese village of Yikpa by angry opposition members. The 4 persons had to run to save their lives into Gbi Apegame at the Ghana border where they were handed over to the Hohoe Police.
- **Sites** where refugees could be received and assisted have been identified. Some of these sites have to be cleared and minimum infrastructures should be installed or rehabilitated (warehouses, sanitation and water).
- The **Accra emergency stockpile** is on alert (with a capacity to meet the needs of 50,000 persons).
- Our office in Accra has been authorized to spend up to **USD 50,000** for some preparedness activities and for the immediate response.
- One **EPRO** was deployed to Ghana one week before the elections in support of the UNHCR Branch Office in Accra.
- **Coordination mechanisms** with partners (UN, Governments and NGOs) have been activated under the joint leadership of UNHCR and the Government.
- The **joint UN-Government contingency plans**, re-activated by UNHCR in February 2005 following the death of President Eyadéma, have been regularly updated.

#### 4. HEADQUARTERS

- A **regional envelope of USD 500,000** from the Operational Reserve is being requested to the ORB. This envelope will cover Bénin, Ghana and Togo and will only be used if and when needed (i.e. a large refugee inflow or major internal displacements) in each of the concerned countries and in close cooperation with ESS. In case the situation returns to normal in Togo and no Togolese refugees seek asylum in the neighboring countries, the unspent balance would then be returned to the Operational Reserve. Any incidental expense that may be needed now, prior to any refugee inflow will be covered from existing projects or from the ESS funding and will be the subject of retroactive adjustments from the additional funds.
- All preparedness measures have been taken in close cooperation with ESS and the different steps related to the Togolese situation have been reflected within the **Action Alert System (Red level for Ghana and**

**Bénin**). In this context, ESS/Field Safety Section have confirmed to the Bureau their availability to address any concerns related to **security** both for humanitarian staff and for potential refugees and persons of concern. Lastly, this situation, the contingency planning process and the ongoing preparedness activities are subject of a permanent contact and effective cooperation both at the field and HQ level between all concerns UN agencies and with ICRC.

West Africa Desk, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2005