

### **The military dictatorship in Togo**

exists since 1963 and is the eldest one in Africa. For 41 years General Gnassingbé Eyadema protected his power with terror against the people and oppression of the opposition. In this period the country has been economically and socially ruined. Almost 70% of the Togolese population is unemployed. One third of the population lives under the poverty limit. Public institutions like schools and hospitals are deteriorating or do not exist any more, while the army consumes one fourth of the state expenses.

Almost all the key positions in the state are in the hand of the Eyadema clan and members of the Kabyé people, to which Eyadema himself belonged. Corruption and misgovernment are daily policy. In 1990 the people of Togo stood up against the dictatorship and demanded democracy. Eyadema named the mass protests as treason and a massacre of the people was launched.

The public pressure forced Eyadema to allow oppositional parties in 1991 and to form a provisional government, but only for a short time. In the same year the hope for political changes was destroyed with a military attack, during which over 3000 persons were killed. Since then any kind of resistance is repressed by the militias and the army. To shut down the voices of the regime opponents prison camps were built, Agombio in the north and Otadi in the south. Since June 1, 2003 Togo seems to be an occupied country: heavily armed forces control the streets and main roads. The people try to stay in their houses and avoid to go out frequently. On the aforementioned date the presidential election took place. The most popular leader of the opposition was excluded. At the same time Eyadema changed the constitution to extend his ruling period again. Because of the apparent shortcomings the United Nations and the European Union refused to send election observers. Human right organizations were threatened after their criticism of the false election. But the criticism of the European Union was mild and limited.

### **-Cheap phosphorous, trade and power guarantee in the military dictatorship-**

From 1884 to 1920 Togo was a German colony and became a French afterwards. Colonial structures continue to exist until today. The most important export good of Togo is phosphorous. The dictatorship allows the mining of phosphate and its processing for extremely cheap price. French companies can produce the phosphate with the methods used during the colonial times. These methods harm the people and the environment. Phosphorous is used for ammunition and bombs. The interest of the European powers for cheap resources, raw materials and labour, is not the only reason for the existence of the neo-colonial structures.

The RPT Regime was protected and supported in the 60ies and 70ies of the last century by the imperialists against the people's opposition. The puppet of the West was used to fight socialistic tendencies and developments in the neighbouring countries.

The dictatorship in Togo is one of the most important markets for arms to all the West African conflict zones. General Eyadema was always the guarantor that Togo was used as an instrument in the entire region against the people's influence for self-determination and independence. The RPT-Regime of Togo was involved in preparation and implementation of armed conflicts as in Sierra Leone, in Congo, and in Ivory Coast.

### **From the father to the son**

On February 5, 2005 the dictator died in his 38th year of ruling period. The French president Chirac declared that with Gnassingbe Eyadema, a former soldier of the Foreign Legion, he has lost a friend. With the support of the military and the will of his father the son of Eyadema took the power. After national and international protests he was forced to hold elections. The elections were held in April 2005. Counterfeited election lists, election boxes stolen by the military forces, burning of votes, massive threats, and attacks of oppositional demonstrations characterized the election day. Faure Eyadema declared himself as the winner of elections and made clear that he is going to continue his father's policy. After the election fake the regime started a permanent persecution and terror campaign. Since then hundreds have been killed. Many thousand have been injured. Numerous reports give evidence for torture, raping, disappearance and murders. The RPT-militias are still active and use the nights to penetrate into cities and villages and to eliminate regime opponents. Family members are attacked and threatened as well.