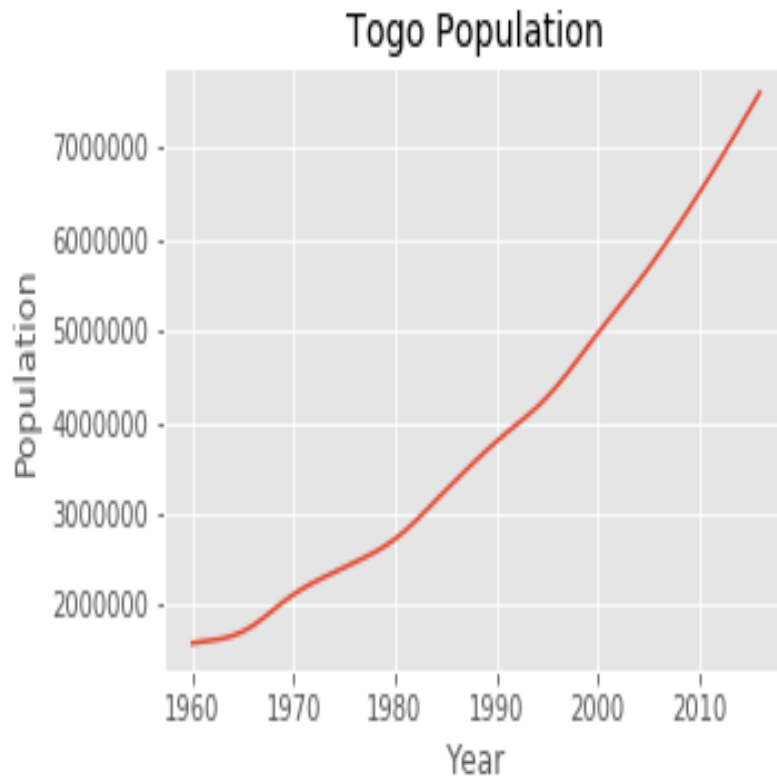


Togo



in the African Union (light blue)Togo (/ˈtoʊˈoʊ/ (listen)), officially the Togolese Republic (French: République Togolaise), is a sovereign state in West Africa bordered by Ghana to the west, Benin to the east and Burkina Faso to the north. It extends south to the Gulf of Guinea, where its capital Lomé is located. Togo covers 57,000 square kilometres (22,008 square miles), making it one of the smallest countries in Africa, with a population of approximately 7.6 million. From the 11th to the 16th century, various tribes entered the region from all directions. From the 16th century to the 18th century, the coastal region was a major trading center for Europeans to search for slaves, earning Togo and the surrounding region the name "The Slave Coast". In 1884, Germany declared a region including present-day Togo as a protectorate called Togoland. After World War I, rule over Togo was transferred to France. Togo gained its independence from France in 1960. In 1967, Gnassingbé Eyadéma led a successful military coup d'état after which he became president of an anti-communist, single-party state. Eventually in 1993, Eyadéma faced multiparty elections, which were marred by irregularities, and won the presidency three times. At the time of his death, Eyadéma was the longest-serving leader in modern African history, having been president for 38 years. In 2005, his son Faure Gnassingbé was elected president.