

2 July 2020

## **Togo: Break-in at the office of the human rights organization Togocheck**

On the night of 28 June 2020, unknown individuals broke into the office of the human rights organization **Togocheck** in Lomé, and robbed the premises.

[Togocheck](#) is a verification platform, established by the organization Centre d'Observation et d'Analyse du Web (Web Observation and Analysis Centre – Co@web) in March 2019. Togocheck aims to verify and denounce false information in efforts to promote and guarantee the right to information for citizens. The organization has been particularly active in the context of COVID-19, working to denounce misinformation and ensure the dissemination of factual and reliable information.

On 28 May 2020, individuals broke into the office of Togocheck, robbing technological equipment and other work materials, whilst also damaging the premises. Members of the organization noticed the break-in on the morning of 29 June. Two gendarmerie officers presented at the scene of the burglary on 29 June and opened an investigation.

Members of the organization believe that the burglary was an act of intimidation in reprisal for its increased activity during the pandemic. Since the onset of the pandemic, Togocheck has worked to provide reliable information and counter the false and inaccurate information being spread regarding COVID-19. To achieve this, the organization has posted clear and informative [‘explainer’ videos](#) on its social media account to dispel rumours and uninformed theories about COVID-19, and guarantee the right to information.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the break-in of the office of Togocheck as it believes that the fact-checking organization is being targeted solely as a result of its legitimate work in defence of the right to information.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Togo to:**

1. Strongly condemn the break-in of the Togocheck office, as it is believed to be directly motivated by the organisation's peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
2. Ensure that the investigation into the burglary of the Togocheck office is thorough and impartial, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Togo are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.