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Africa News

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Togo; Togo - Inter-Party Dialogue Kicks-off

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Opposition leaders want conditions that will allow Togolese vote without fear.

The Burkinabe Minister of Security, Djibril Bassole, says "real negotiations" will begin between the government of Togo and the opposition today, Thursday 17th.

He said real negotiations will take place this morning on the basis of a document which will be finalised by Burkinabe's President, Blaise Compaore.

This phase of the Togolese inter-party talks has been made possible after a series of separate meetings between Compaore and Togo's President Faure Gnassingbe, representatives of political parties, religious leaders and traditional chiefs. The talks were suspended last month following disagreements on the composition of an independent national electoral commission.

Opposition leaders say they are confident that parliamentary elections can take place soon, opting that a date should be announced in the next few weeks.

Leopold Gnigninvi of the Democratic Convention for the African People says a long lasting solution is his ultimate dream, insinuating that his followers "know how deep Togo's problems go." He wants conditions that will allow Togolese go to polling without fear.

Togo descended into political turmoil following April 2005 presidential elections marred by violence and allegations of vote rigging.

The violence claimed between 400 and 500 lives, according to an inquiry by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour.

Though protesters no longer hurl flagstones against security forces and other targets, the trouble has not yet quite been put to rest. Traders and residents bustle over cracks in the repaired pavements, going about their daily business in fear.

The violence scared some 40,000 people, mostly women and children, out of the country. Many who crossed the eastern border to Benin and to Ghana have not yet returned.

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