**Universal Periodic Review 40 – Togo**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the Government of Togo for its comprehensive report.

We are concerned about reports of acts of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force by some defense and security forces, such as during widespread demonstrations by opposition political parties and civil society, and during demonstrations in reaction to the COVID-19 measures. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of a law on the protection of human rights defenders. We note with concern, however, that the revised criminal code of 2015 and other existing laws, policies and regulations continue to restrict freedom of assembly and curtail dissent.

We therefore recommend the government to:

1. Amend laws that restrict the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, such as the Criminal Code and Law N° 2011–010 on freedom of assembly and public and peaceful demonstrations, and to bring them in line with international and regional human rights standards, including by removing provisions that criminalize the organization of and participation in peaceful demonstrations;
2. Promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigate all allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention, intimidation, threats, harassment and attacks against human rights defenders, journalists or anyone expressing a dissenting opinion, and bring perpetrators to justice.

Thank you.