

Court rejects repressive press law amendments

The Committee to Protect Journalists welcomes Wednesday's [20 March 2013] ruling by Togo's Constitutional Court to reject repressive amendments to a media law that granted the state-run media regulator sweeping powers of censorship.

A panel of judges declared that six articles of Togo's 2009 press law, which were amended on 19 February 2013 by the ruling party-controlled National Assembly, were inconsistent with the constitution, according to news reports. The constitutional review took place at the request of president Faure Gnassingbe, news reports said. The decision effectively nullifies the new measures.

The amendments had granted the High Authority for Broadcasting and Communication (HAAC), Togo's state-run media regulatory body, the power to, among other actions, summarily shut down news outlets and seize their equipment without a court order. HAAC is composed of nine members, four of whom are directly nominated by Togo's president with the remaining five members nominated by the national assembly, according to CPJ research.

"We welcome Faure Gnassingbe's decision to listen to the concerns expressed by Togo's press and submit these repressive amendments for constitutional review," said CPJ Africa advocacy coordinator Mohamed Keita from New York.

Local journalists had publicly protested the amendments by gathering in front of the presidential palace for a peaceful three-day sit-in last week.

Source: [allAfrica](#)