

MONTHLY UPDATE

IN TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE

25 MARCH • NO 3/2021

MADAGASCAR



MAIN STORIES

A Crisis Brewing

All the President's
Women and Men

IMF on the Country's
Way Forward

Humanitarian
Situation

HIGHLIGHTS

- The National Committee for Strategic Orientation and Monitoring (CNOSS – Comité National d'Orientation et de Suivi Stratégiques) and the National Platform of Malagasy Civil Society Organisations (PFNOSCM/VOIFIRAIANA – Plate-forme des organisations de la société civile de Madagascar), which represent 3 000 associations, issued a statement saying that the country is once again going through a political crisis. The poor management of the country, which promotes anarchy and the failure of the State poses a real threat to the country's stability, they have warned.
- The Rodoben'ny Mpanohitra hoan'ny Demokrasia eto Madagaskara (RMDM) opposition coalition, led by former President Marc Ravalomanana, called for a government of national unity to address the country's many problems and to promote peace and reconciliation.
- The United Nations resident coordinator in Madagascar, Issa Sanogo, called for dialogue between the government and opposition parties to defuse the 'unfolding crisis'.
- President Andry Rajoelina has entrusted the outgoing president of the High Constitutional Court (HCC), Jean-Eric Rakotoarisoa, with the running of the affairs of the court until its nine members are replaced.
- According to Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2021 report, Madagascar is rated as 'Partly Free' with an aggregate score of 60/100 (0=Least Free, 100=Most Free).
- On 20 February, 12 people were arrested by the police for participating in a prohibited demonstration in Antananarivo, including a retired commander of the gendarmerie.

MADAGASCAR



- Opposition groups, on 6 March, held a large rally on private land in Tanjombato, an industrial zone on the outskirts of the capital.
- On 15 March, protests erupted at the University of Antananarivo over the non-payment of scholarships.
- Villagers in the Menabe region called for military reinforcements following a string of attacks and kidnappings by highway robbers. In the second week of March alone, there were ten attacks in the region.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF's) representative in Madagascar, Marc Gérard, said that the latest estimates predicted a recession of at least 4% in 2020. He said that the issue of financial resources and the budgetary independence of the state 'remains worrying'. Fighting corruption and improving the business climate would help attract the private investment that the country needed to ensure its development, Gérard concluded.
- As of 25 March 2021, Madagascar had 22 844 confirmed coronavirus cases, 21 282 recoveries and 363 deaths. President Andry Rajoelina said he did not plan to vaccinate himself against COVID-19, preferring a herbal 'remedy', and he was in no hurry to launch mass inoculations for his citizens. Amnesty International criticised Rajoelina's stance, saying it represented an attack on citizens' right to the best possible healthcare.
- The 2021 Index of Economic Freedom published by the Heritage Foundation ranks Madagascar at 112 out of 178 countries (178=worst; 1=best). Madagascar falls in the category of 'Mostly Unfree' nations.
- According to the African Development Bank (AfDB) debt sustainability indicators worsened in 2020 because of the COVID 19 crisis. The debt-to-GDP ratio deteriorated to 44.8% in 2020 from 38.7% in 2019.

MADAGASCAR



- A growing number of differences between the World Bank and Rajoelina could end up costing the Madagascar government hundreds of millions of dollars.
- Two years into his presidency, Rajoelina has still not filled some the most important diplomatic appointments, leaving Madagascar without an ambassador to the United States (US), the United Nations (UN) or South Africa.
- The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Shardul arrived in the port of Antsiranana to undertake joint patrols and training with the Malagasy Navy. INS also delivered a consignment of 1 000 metric tonnes of rice and 100 000 tablets of hydroxy-chloroquine (HCQ).
- France signed a moratorium on the repayment of Malagasy debt of €1 647 221.78. The first payments were postponed until 2022.
- The World Bank approved a \$150 million additional grant for the Social Safety Net Project (SSNP) to further support the government to increase the access of extremely poor households to safety net services.
- The US Department of Labor (USDOL) announced a \$4.5 million cooperation agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in collaboration with UNICEF, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Responsible Mica Initiative, in order to put an end to child labour practices in the mica mining sector.

