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The Haute Cour Constitutionnelle (HCC) (high constitutional court) confirms the senate election results of the Commission Electorale Nationale Independante (CENI) (independent national electoral commission). The final results give President Hery Rajaonarimampianina (2014-present) and his Hery Vaovao ho an'i Madagascar (HVM) a majority in the upper chamber of parliament. The senate elects Honore Rakotomanana, a former International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and Rajaonarimampianina ally, as its new president. Rumours of an imminent cabinet reshuffle circulate after the senators assume their duties. An Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) delegation visits to assess progress on preparations for the upcoming 16th OIF summit, planned for Antananarivo in November. The World Bank announces \$690 in aid commitment to Madagascar. Armed cattle rustlers attack the village of Antanamaro in southern Madagascar.

CENI releases official senate election results

The majority win of President **Hery Rajaonarimampianina** (2014- present) and his **Hery Vaovao ho an'i Madagascar (HVM)** party in December's senate elections will boost the government's efforts to implement reform measures. **Commission Electorale Nationale Independante (CENI)** (independent national electoral commission) chairman **Hery Rakotomanana** released official provisional results on 10 January from the 29 December senate elections.¹ The provisional results confirmed that Rajaonarimampianina and HVM won a majority of votes in the senate elections.² A majority in the senate will help create a stable legislative environment that will allow the government to implement its reform agenda.³

The CENI forwarded the official provisional results to the **Haute Cour Constitutionnelle (HCC)** (high constitutional court) for validation.⁴ The HCC dismissed several post-election petitions from the opposition and confirmed that HVM won 34 of the 42 elected senate seats.⁵ The HCC also confirmed that **Tiako i Madagasikara (TIM)**, the political party allied to former ousted president **Marc Ravalomanana** (2002-2009), won three seats and **Miaraka amin'ny Prezida Rajoelina's (Mapar)**, the political party allied to former president **Andry Nirina Rajoelina** (2009-2014), won two seats.⁶ Three smaller parties – **Fanilo**, **Fanorolahy** and **Mafinasoa** – won one seat each.⁷ The new senate will comprise 63 members; the remaining 21 are presidential appointees.⁸

The senate election results are as follows:

¹ AFP, 10 Jan 2016.

² Madagascar Tribune, 4 Jan 2016.

³ Madagascar Tribune, 4 Jan 2016.

⁴ AFP, 10 Jan 2016.

⁵ www.expressmada.com

⁶ www.expressmada.com

⁷ www.expressmada.com

⁸ www.expressmada.com

Province	Votes counted to date	Voter turnout	Leading party	2 nd place party	3 rd place party	Other candidates
Toliara	100%	95.0%	HVM (67.81%)	Miaradia (7.79%)	TIM (6.03%)	18.37%
Toasmasina	100%	95.91%	HVM (64.79%)	TIM (15.87%)	Mifanaosoa (12.27%)	7.07%
Fianarantsoa	100%	95.12%	HVM (68.49%)	Fanorolahy (9.79%)	TIM (9.36%)	12.36%
Mahajanga	100%	94.83%	HVM (61.08%)	Mapar (23.47%)	TIM (13.74%)	1.71%
Antsiranana	100%	98.03%	HVM (64.65%)	Fanilo (19.14%)	Mamimad (7.79%)	8.42%
Antananarivo	100%	95.33%	HVM (68.99%)	TIM (17.17%)	Marina (8.35%)	5.49%

Rajaonarimampianina appoints 21 senators

Rajaonarimampianina appointed 21 senators on 2 February.⁹ Rajaonarimampianina chose a wide range of individuals from across Madagascar's political spectrum in order to broaden his political support base and create a more cooperative environment in the new senate.¹⁰ The appointees include opposition members, current ministers and ministers from previous governments.¹¹ The presidential senate appointees are:

- **Alibena Razafitombo** (former handicraft minister);
- **Brigitte Rasamoelina** (culture minister);
- **Rasoanaivo Angeline**;
- **Razafimahaleo Lantsoa (Fanilo)**;
- **Ravoninahitrinarivo Gabrielle**;
- **Bia Céline Marie Yolande**;
- **General Rehoesha**;
- **Ratalata Georges**;
- **Rakotovazaha Olivier (MFM)**;
- **Colonel Botomanovatsara** (former public works minister);
- **Rajobson Johary (AVI)**;
- **Ramparison Luc**;
- **Randriamalalarison Xavier**;
- **Rakotoseheno Zo (Midi Madagascar editor)**;
- **Honore Rakotomanana** (former senate president);
- **Mohamed Mourad Abdirassoul** (economist and businessperson);
- **Rakotomaria Joseph**;
- **Pierre Rajaonarivelo** (MDM and former foreign affairs minister);
- **M. Ahmad** (fisheries minister);
- **Betina Bruno**;
- **Jean-Martin Rakotozafy** (economist and president of the **Antananarivo Chamber of Commerce**).¹²

Honore Rakotomanana elected senate president

The 63 newly elected and appointed senators convened on 9 February and elected Honore Rakotomanana as senate president.¹³ Rakotomanana is a member of Rajaonarimampianina's HVM

⁹ www.lagazette-dgi.com

¹⁰ www.lagazette-dgi.com

¹¹ www.lagazette-dgi.com

¹² www.lagazette-dgi.com

¹³ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

party and acts as an informal adviser to the presidency as well.¹⁴ Rakotomanana will ensure the senate backs the government's legislative agenda, and will help reduce any potential conflict between the presidency and the senate.¹⁵ The senate president is an important role as he or she takes over as president in the event of a vacancy.¹⁶ At 82 years of age, Rakotomanana is unlikely to become a political threat to Madagascar's mainstream politicians.¹⁷

Rakotomanana is a law professor and a former deputy prosecutor at the **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)**.¹⁸ He was reportedly forced to resign his ICTR position due to "*serious deficiencies in management and operations*".¹⁹ Rakotomanana was also senate president and president of the HCC in 2001 under former president **Didier Ratsiraka** (1975-1993/1997-2002).²⁰

Cabinet reshuffle expected

Rumours of an imminent cabinet reshuffle continue to circulate in the **Malagasy** media. As one political analyst simply said "*... a cabinet shuffle [is] likely soon ...*".²¹ The expectations of a cabinet reshuffle began after Rajaonarimampianina appointed two sitting ministers to the senate, fisheries minister Ahmad and culture minister Rasamoelina (see above). Many members of the current cabinet fear they may lose their jobs in the reshuffle as Rajaonarimampianina takes the opportunity to dismiss poor performing ministers.

*"Obviously, the current executive members will not sit idly by and will defend tooth and nail their seats. The majority are already active members of the presidential party and therefore believe that membership is an asset in itself. Ministers who are not HVM, such as trade and agriculture, may have to worry ... The environment minister who could not stop the rosewood trafficking ... may fall by the wayside; it is only to ingratiate donors. In any case, politicians will not sleep quietly in the coming weeks."*²²

Rajaonarimampianina has ordered all cabinet members not to travel abroad, which is a sign of an impending cabinet reshuffle.²³

*"For several weeks, the impending restructuring of the governmental team has animated the political sphere. Some information says that the axe will fall this week. The coincidence of the probable measure requiring ministers to remain in the country, despite the explanations, could confirm these claims."*²⁴

However, a source within the presidency told the Malagasy media claim that any reshuffle will only involve a few ministries.²⁵

OIF summit assessment mission visits Madagascar

French media reported on 22 January that a mission from the **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)** visited Madagascar to assess progress on work related to the upcoming 16th OIF summit, planned for **Antananarivo** in November.²⁶ Prior to the arrival of the OIF mission, there was media speculation that the government is behind schedule and, in some cases, has not even started preparations.

¹⁴ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

¹⁵ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

¹⁶ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

¹⁷ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

¹⁸ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

¹⁹ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

²⁰ RFI, 10 Feb 2016.

²¹ Source, political analyst, Madagascar

²² Madagascar Tribune, 3 Feb 2017.

²³ www.lexpressmada.com

²⁴ www.lexpressmada.com

²⁵ www.lexpressmada.com

²⁶ www.rfi.fr

“Just a few weeks ago, no construction had started and many observers even doubted the summit. But the Malagasy authorities did everything to reassure.”²⁷

The OIF mission reportedly witnessed positive signs of the government’s efforts to ensure the facilities are ready.²⁸ OIF summit ambassador **Jacques Bilodeau** said the mission had seen positive results:

“Having already done the same in other countries which also encountered organisational difficulties, the Antananarivo summit is engaged in what concerns us...”²⁹

Ratsiferana Hughes, chairman of the national steering committee of the 16th OIF summit,³⁰ referred to the Francophonie village during a visit to one of the constructions sites:

“It will be a complex where there is a 120-room hotel, apartments, a large exhibition hall of 8,000 square meters. And besides, there will be three movie theatres ...”³¹

In preparation for the OIF Summit, the government is working on the expansion of the **Ivato International Airport (IIA)** in Antananarivo, the renovation of the **Ivato International Conference Centre** and the construction of a ring road that connects IIA with **Soavimasandro**.³²

Another OIF follow-up mission is expected to take place later this year at a date still to be determined.³³

World Bank to give \$690m in aid

The **World Bank** has pledged to provide \$690m in aid to Madagascar over three years.³⁴ Madagascar representative **Mark Lundell** announced on 9 February that the World Bank would boost aid to Madagascar to \$230m annually for the next three years. The new aid pledge will enhance stability in Madagascar and help the government address key economic and social reforms which are important to help the government recover from five years of economic stagnation under former president Rajoelina.³⁵ International donors resumed lending and aid to Madagascar after successful elections in 2013 that ended the political crisis and brought Rajaonarimampianina to power in January 2014.³⁶

Lundell noted *“the shortcomings in governance and risk generated by the fragility of this country”* but said the World Bank was aware of the efforts the government has made.³⁷ The World Bank had provided \$110m a year in assistance before the new pledge, through the World Bank’s **International Development Association (IDA)** turnaround facility.³⁸ Economy and planning minister **Herilanto Raveloharison** said one-third of the World Bank’s new aid commitment would go towards budget support.³⁹

Sherritt International and Sumitomo announce \$1.7 billion losses

Canada-based Sherritt International and **Japan-based Sumitomo Corp** announced on 13 January that they face \$1.7 billion losses on their **Ambatovy** nickel mine in Madagascar.⁴⁰ Decreased demand from the stainless steel sector continues to put downward pressure on nickel prices.

²⁷ www.rfi.fr

²⁸ www.rfi.fr

²⁹ www.rfi.fr

³⁰ www.rfi.fr

³¹ www.rfi.fr

³² www.expressmada.com

³³ www.rfi.fr

³⁴ Reuters, 9 Feb 2016.

³⁵ Reuters, 9 Feb 2016.

³⁶ Reuters, 9 Feb 2016.

³⁷ Reuters, 9 Feb 2016.

³⁸ Reuters, 9 Feb 2016.

³⁹ Reuters, 9 Feb 2016.

⁴⁰ Reuters, 13 Jan 2016.

“Ambatovy is losing money on every pound of product they produce.”⁴¹

Sherritt International, which holds a 40% stake in Ambatovy and acts as the project operator, said it recorded an impairment expense of approximately \$1.12m, and that total losses amount to \$2.4 billion.⁴² Sumitomo, which holds a 32.5% stake in Ambatovy, said it faced a write down of \$652m and withdrew its earnings forecast for the year through March 2016.⁴³

Cattle rustlers attack southern Madagascar village

Armed cattle rustlers, known as **Dahalos**, attacked the village of **Antanamaro** (near **Ilakaka**), in southern Madagascar on 2 February.⁴⁴ Malagasy security forces later captured the Dahalos who managed to steal 400 head of cattle. A total of 12 Dahalos, five villagers and one cattle breeder were killed in the confrontation.⁴⁵ Cattle rustling is a Malagasy tradition that has fueled violence mainly in south-eastern Madagascar. Males stealing prized cattle, known locally as *zebu* (a symbol of wealth) is a tradition to demonstrate male valour.⁴⁶ The government has classified the area where the attack took place as a ‘zone rouge’ (red zone), which indicates a high risk of violence related to cattle rustling.⁴⁷

This is the first major reported cattle rustling incident in 2016. There were also several serious cattle rustling incidents in 2015 (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar September 2015*). Clashes between security forces and cattle rustlers in **Ankazoabo** (south-western Madagascar) in August 2015 killed eight soldiers and 15 cattle rustlers. Violence related to cattle theft also plagued the previous Rajoelina government. In August 2014, 80 armed Dahalos stole 150 zebu from the village of **Tranomaro (Amboasary Sud District)**. A second attack took place on the same day in the village of **Mahaly (Amboasary Sud)**, during which Dahalos stole 300 zebu.⁴⁸

Malagasy security forces remain overstretched and underfunded. Madagascar only has one police officer for every 3,000 people or one police officer for every 60 square kilometres.⁴⁹ The new budget has allocated money for the recruitment and training of 1,200 new police officers,⁵⁰ but this is unlikely to have a short-term impact on the security situation in south-eastern Madagascar.

“There is lots of talk of more potential disturbances ... security, especially in the rural areas, is bad and getting worse.”⁵¹

Implications

An HVM allied majority in the senate will help create a stable legislative environment that will allow the Rajaonarimampianina government to implement its reform agenda. The rumours of an imminent cabinet reshuffle will result in a temporary slow down in the government’s reform efforts as cabinet ministers focus their political energy on saving their jobs.

The OIF summit is an important milestone in Madagascar’s return to the international community after its successful transition back to democratic rule. However, there are concerns that the government is not sufficiently prepared to host such a large international event. **France**, as the lead IOF nation, will have the final say on whether the summit can take place.

⁴¹ Source, mining sector analyst, Madagascar

⁴² Reuters, 13 Jan 2016.

⁴³ Reuters, 13 Jan 2016.

⁴⁴ RFI, 2 Feb 2016

⁴⁵ RFI, 2 Feb 2016

⁴⁶ Multiple sources: AFP, 17 Aug 2014; Global Voices, 19 Aug 2014.

⁴⁷ RFI, 2 Feb 2016

⁴⁸ Multiple sources: AFP, 17 Aug 2014; Global Voices, 19 Aug 2014.

⁴⁹ La Gazette, 2 Aug 2014.

⁵⁰ La Gazette, 2 Aug 2014.

⁵¹ Source, political analyst, Madagascar

The new World bank aid pledge will enhance stability in Madagascar and help the government address key economic and social reforms which are important to help the country recover from five years of economic stagnation under former president Rajoelina.

Ambatovy's financial trouble is of concern for the government's economic development agenda, as it is one of only two major mining projects in operation in Madagascar. Inter-communal violence related to cattle theft will remain a problem in the south, as the Malagasy security forces remain stretched and underfunded.

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