

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Rivo Rakotovoao, president of the senate and member of the **Hery Vaovao ho an'i Madagasikara (HVM)** party of former Madagascar President **Hery Rajaonarimampianina (2014-2018)**, says on social media that it is time to restructure the HVM and return to politics. Demonstrations continue against the planned **Tana-Masoandra** project in which the government aims to build a new city to relieve congestion in the capital, **Antananarivo**. Protestors say the government did not consult them about the project and they do not agree with the expropriation of land for the project. Rumours of an imminent fuel shortage cause **Malagasy** to run to the petrol pumps, causing fuel supplies to plummet. Long queues at petrol service stations cause problems for the transport sector and other businesses that rely on constant fuel supplies.

Will former President Rajaonarimampianina's party return to the political fray?

Rivo Rakotovoao, president of the senate and a member of **Hery Vaovao ho an'i Madagasikara (HVM)**, the party of former Madagascar President **Hery Rajaonarimampianina (2014-2018)**, said on social media that it is time to restructure the HVM and return to the political scene.¹ Madagascar politics does need a third candidate to end the two-party environment around President **Andry Rajoelina (2009-2014, 2019-present)** and former president **Marc Ravalomanana (2002-2009)**, but the HVM may not have the necessary support to challenge the current political heavyweights. Rajaonarimampianina and the HVM disappeared from the political scene after losing in the first round of the presidential election in November 2018 (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar November 2018*).² Rakotovoao made the comments after a meeting with Rajaonarimampianina in **France** at the end of September.³

2018 Presidential Election First Round Results

Andry Rajoelina	TGV	39.49%
Marc Ravalomanana	TIM	36.64%
Hery Rajaonarimampianina	HVM	7.52%

It is unclear how the HVM plans to restructure. Many of its members have deserted the party and now support President Rajoelina. The HVM's remaining members are not present in the legislature.⁴ Rakotovoao is the only HVM politician who is still influential, so this may be his attempt to lead the party into the next elections. According to an **Antananarivo**-based political analyst,

"Nobody has heard anything from Hery [Rajaonarimampianina] or the HVM since the end of last year. I think they were quite embarrassed with how poorly they did in the first round and then a lot of the supporters started supporting Rajoelina in the second round. They still support Rajoelina and I don't think they would go back to the HVM because there is not much hope that

¹ RFI Afrique, 20 Oct 2019

² RFI Afrique, 20 Oct 2019

³ RFI Afrique, 20 Oct 2019

⁴ RFI Afrique, 20 Oct 2019

the HVM will win the elections next time, or have any real political power. I agree that Rakotovoao may have presidential aspirations, but personally I don't think HVM is the way to get there.”⁵

The HVM is planning a general meeting in November. Depending on the support for Rajaonarimampianina and/or Rakotovoao, this is where it will make a final decision about whether it can restructure and offer a third choice in Malagasy politics. In the current political context this seems unlikely.

Protests over proposed Tana-Masoandra city project

Demonstrations continue against the planned **Tana-Masoandra** project in which the government wants to build a new city to relieve congestion in the capital, Antananarivo. Protestors say the government did not consult them and they do not agree with the expropriation of land for the project.⁶ The project is necessary and was one of Rajoelina's campaign promises, so it is likely to go ahead despite the protests. Changes are needed to support development in the capital region, but Rajoelina's aggressive moves to push the project forward may cost him support in rural communities.

Three municipalities – **Ambohidrapeto**, **Anosibe Zaivola** and **Ambohitrimanjaka** – are most affected by the planned project and are spearheading the demonstrations. The government plans to build a new city on 1,000 hectares of land within these municipalities, which will accommodate 300,000 people.⁷ Protestors are upset with the lack of communication from the government, particularly regarding the expropriation of land and backfilling of rice fields, where most residents of the region make their living.⁸ Protests have been largely peaceful, though a protest on 17 October in Ambohitrimanjaka led to a clash with police in which five protestors were wounded and nine arrested.⁹

President Rajoelina plans to go forward with the project, one of the main commitments of his **Initiative Emergence Madagascar** presidential campaign, despite the protests. He appears unwilling to listen to the protestors' demands, which include removing all building equipment and releasing the nine people arrested.¹⁰ The coordinator of the project, **Gerard Andriamanohisoa**, says that all residents will be compensated for the expropriation and that construction will only start once expropriation is complete.¹¹ Defence ministry secretary of state **Richard Ravalomanana** said that he would not tolerate the assault of police, which means the nine arrested are likely to remain in prison while construction and protests continue.¹²

Opposition parties agree with the government that the new city is necessary to prevent congestion in Antananarivo, but question why it is in such a rush to complete the project. They claim the government neglected to conduct an environmental impact study or communicate with landowners in the area before attempting to begin construction.¹³ The government and the protestors appear to be deadlocked, with both refusing to back down. However, the government's resources and Rajoelina's business acumen give them an advantage, and the demonstrations are likely to fizzle out as landowners increasingly accept financial compensation or new land in exchange for their current property.

⁵ Source, political analyst, Madagascar

⁶ Madagascar Tribune, 21 Oct 2019

⁷ Madagascar Tribune, 21 Oct 2019

⁸ RFI Afrique, 20 Oct 2019

⁹ Madagascar Tribune, 21 Oct 2019

¹⁰ Madagascar Tribune, 21 Oct 2019

¹¹ RFI Afrique, 20 Oct 2019

¹² Madagascar Tribune, 21 Oct 2019

¹³ Madagascar Tribune, 16 Oct 2019

Fuel shortage fears cause run on petrol stations

Rumours of an imminent fuel shortage in mid-October caused Malagasy to run to the petrol pumps, causing petrol station fuel supplies to plummet and leading to long queues and problems for the transport sector and other businesses that rely on constant fuel supplies.¹⁴ While the shortage was artificially created, the fact that many petrol stations ran out of fuel may indicate that they lack the reserves the government claims they have.

Rumours began on social media in mid-October that the **Office malgache des hydrocarbures (OMH)** (Malagasy hydrocarbons office) was going to run out of its fuel supply, which led to the run on the petrol stations.¹⁵ Despite the OMH's statement that there was more than enough fuel to cover the needs of all consumers throughout the national territory, including Antananarivo, many Malagasy went to stock up on fuel, causing shortages and long queues.¹⁶ The government had previously issued statements that there were sufficient fuel stocks for 45 days, which the ensuing shortages disproved.¹⁷

Many fuel stations around Antananarivo, such as the suburbs of **Ankazotokana**, **Antanimena** and **Andohatapenaka**, have run dry and are no longer able to sell to consumers.¹⁸ The queues have also caused havoc for business. One businessman said:

*"We have goods to deliver every day. We only have one delivery vehicle, which is already struggling to complete all deliveries alone. Today, the driver was forced to spend several hours trying to refuel before returning to work. Our customers understand the situation and accept the delays, but it still hurts us."*¹⁹

Energy, water and hydrocarbons minister **Vonjy Andriamanga** blamed the fuel shortage on overconsumption, but said that as of 23 October, there was enough fuel to supply the capital for eight days.²⁰ A fuel tanker with 16 million litres of gasoline was expected to arrive at **Toamasina** on 24 October, which would increase supply. However, many consumers are still looking for answers from Andriamanga before they stop hoarding fuel.²¹ The OMH and the government will need to reassure consumers that there is fuel and that there will be no further shortages or price increases in the near future.

¹⁴ Midi Madagasikara, 23 Oct 2019

¹⁵ Midi Madagasikara, 23 Oct 2019

¹⁶ Midi Madagasikara, 23 Oct 2019

¹⁷ L'Express Madagascar, 22 Oct 2019

¹⁸ Madagascar Tribune, 22 Oct 2019

¹⁹ Midi Madagasikara, 23 Oct 2019

²⁰ Midi Madagasikara, 23 Oct 2019

²¹ La Gazette, 23 Oct 2019

Planner

Nov 2019 (**Madagascar**) 2020 budget expected to be presented;
 4-7 Nov 2019 **Moshi (Tanzania)** Vanilla 2019;
 4-8 Nov 2019 **Cape Town (South Africa)** Africa Oil Week;
 27 Nov 2019 (**Madagascar**) Municipal elections scheduled;
 26 Jun 2020 (**Madagascar**) Independence Day;
 2023 (**Madagascar**) Potential presidential elections;

Chronology

23 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Seychelles News Agency*. Police clash with protestors over plans for the **Tana-Masoandra** city project, meant to reduce congestion in **Antananarivo**, but which protestors say will take land used for rice paddies;

22 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *RFI Afrique*. A rumour of a shortage of fuel leads to a run on petrol stations as **Malagasy** look for fuel;

17 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Reuters*. **Morocco-based Banque Central Populaire** acquires a 71% stake in **Banque de Madagascar et de l'Océan Indien** from **France-based BPCE**;

15 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Mining Weekly*. **Australia-based** mining company **Bass Metals** reports record production from its **Graphmada** graphite mine with 1,120 wet tonnes of graphite over the past three months;

14 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *ReliefWeb*. The **African Development Bank** launches the **Africa Disaster Risks Financing Programme** in **Madagascar**, which will strengthen early warning systems and contingency plans;

14 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Aeronautics Online*. Majority state-owned airline **Air Madagascar** says it will order three A220 aircraft from **Airbus** by the end of 2019;

8 Oct 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Global Construction Review*. **France-based** engineering company **Colas**, along with **Norway-based** hydropower company **SN Power**, and local firm **Jovena**, plan to develop the 120 megawatt **Volobe** hydropower plant on the **Ivondro River**;

5 Oct 2019 **Antsiranana (Madagascar)** *ANI*. Defence minister **Leon Jean Richard Rakotonirina** visits **Indian** naval ships docked in northern Madagascar to intensify defence cooperation;

30 Sep 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Mining Weekly*. **Canada-based** mining company **NextSource Materials** says its build costs at the **Molo** graphite project will increase due to equipment inflation;

30 Sep 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Mining Weekly*. **Australia-based** mining company **Bass Metals** signs an MOU with **United States-based** graphite processor **Urbix Resources** for a joint venture to establish a production facility;

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