

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Madagascar Monthly Briefing July 2019

Madagascar Summary 26 July 2019

President Andry Rajoelina (2009-2014, 2019-present) re-appoints Christian Ntsay as prime minister. Ntsay has been prime minister since mid-2018 and his re-appointment, and the retention of his cabinet, is a positive sign for Madagascar's political stability. Human rights NGO Amnesty International says the Malagasy government must take action to end a culture of impunity for killings and torture by security forces. Former president Marc Ravalomanana (2002-2009) and his political party, Tiako I Madagasikara (TIM), hold a two-day congress in Antananarivo to rebuild after obtaining only 16 of 151 seats in the legislative elections.

President Rajoelina re-appoints Christian Ntsay as prime minister...

President **Andry Rajoelina** (2009-2014, 2019-present) re-appointed **Christian Ntsay** as prime minister on 19 July.¹ Ntsay has been prime minister since mid-2018 and his re-appointment, and the retention of his cabinet, is a positive sign for Madagascar's political stability.

Former President **Hery Rajaonarimampianina** (2014-2018) appointed Ntsay prime minister in June 2018 to direct a unity government ahead of the December 2018 presidential elections.² Rajoelina reappointed him in January 2019 to lead the country until after the legislative elections, which took place on 27 May (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar May 2019*). Rajoelina's coalition, the **Isika Rehitra Miaraka amin'i Andry Rajolina (IRD)**, won a majority in the legislative elections, which gives Rajoelina a mandate to run the country as he sees fit (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar June 2019*).

Ntsay is a former high-level **International Labour Organisation** official and was also Madagascar's labour minister from 2002 to 2003 under former President **Marc Ravalomanana** (2002-2009) and prime minister **Jacques Sylla**.³ Ntsay is not a member of one of the large parties and is not aligned politically with Rajoelina or Ravalomanana, the main opposition leader.⁴ Ntsay is seen as a technocrat with a good reputation, including internationally. A **United Nations** official says that Ntsay is "able to stay above the [political] fray for the good of his country."⁵

Ntsay named his 22-member cabinet on 24 July.⁶

	Cabinet position
Major General Léon Jean Richard Rakotonirina	National Defence
Naina Andriantsitohaina	Foreign affairs
Richard Randriamandrato	Economy and finance
Jacques Randrianasolo	Justice
Tianarivelo Razafimahefa	Interior and decentralisation
Comptroller General of Police Roger Rafanomezantsoa	Public security
Hajo Andrianainarivelo	Spatial planning, housing and public works
Marie Thérèse Volahaingo	National education, technical and

¹ Linfo.re, 22 Jul 2019

² Jeune Afrique, 19 Jul 2019

³ Linfo.re, 22 Jul 2019

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 19 Jul 2019

⁵ Jeune Afrique, 19 Jul 2019

⁶ Orange, 24 Jul 2019

	Cabinet position
	vocational education
Julio Rakotonirina	Public health
Lucien Fanomezantsoa Ranarivelo	Livestock, agriculture and fisheries
Vonjy Andriamanga	Energy, water and hydrocarbons
Fidiniavo Ravokatra	Mines and strategic resources
Joel Randriamandranto	Transport, tourism and meteorology
Gisèle Ranampy	Labour, employment, public service and social law
Blanche Nirina Richard	Higher education and scientific research
Lantosoa Rakotomalala	Industry, commerce and handicrafts
Alexandre Georget	Environment and sustainable development
Christian Ramarolahy	Posts, telecommunications and digital development
Irmah Lucien Naharimamy	Population, social welfare and advancement of women
Tinoka Roberto Michael Raharoarilala	Youth and sports
Lalotiana Andriantongarivo Rakotondrazafy	Communication and culture
Major General Richard Ravalomanana	Secretary of state at the national defence ministry in charge of the gendarmie

This is the same cabinet Ntsay has led since January, with only one change. Blanche Nirina Richard replaces **Félicité Madeleine Rejo-Fienena** as higher education and scientific research minister.⁷

Ntsay will push forward Rajoelina's campaign promises, such as drafting a constitutional revision to eliminate the senate and giving more power to regional authorities.⁸ Rajoelina appears to trust Ntsay to work with him on his agenda, saying that they

"...have the same vision and share the objectives of the initiatives for the emergence of Madagascar."⁹

While there are complaints about the number of men in the cabinet – sixteen men to just six women – the reappointment of Ntsay and his ministers is a positive sign of political stability. Rajoelina's dominance in the executive and legislature will allow him to pass policies and legislation without much of a fight. The national assembly unanimously elected **Christine Razanamahaso**, a close ally of Rajoelina, as speaker on 17 July, further cementing Rajoelina's power in the government.¹⁰ This should be a positive for investors, as it will create more certainty over any changes that are coming. Rajoelina has stuck to his campaign commitments and will work on revising the constitution to abolish the senate and give more power to regional authorities as promised during this year. There may also be changes to the mining and oil code, which were supposed to be completed during Rajaonarimampianina's term, but which never made it to the national assembly. Any changes are expected to be more investor friendly as Rajoelina continues his pro-business approach, despite protests from environmental groups.

⁷ Madagascar Tribune, 25 Jul 2019

⁸ Jeune Afrique, 19 Jul 2019

⁹ Madagascar Tribune, 20 Jul 2019

¹⁰ RFI Afrique, 18 Jul 2019

... as Marc Ravalomanana officially becomes leader of the opposition

Former President Marc Ravalomanana and his political party, **Tiako I Madagasikara (TIM)**, held a two-day congress in **Antananarivo** on 12-13 July to rebuild after obtaining only 16 of 151 seats in the legislative elections.¹¹ Ravalomanana remains the only person who can rival Rajoelina at the moment and his role as opposition leader will be important to keep Rajoelina in line, despite Rajoelina controlling both the executive and the legislature. Ravalomanana said at the conference, which was titled “*TIM is still alive*”, that he is ready to lead the opposition:

“[I will] guide the country in the right direction and we will not shut up. I will not shut up anymore. A leader cannot be beaten if the people follow him.”¹²

TIM is the official opposition by default, as no other political party is registered as an opposition party.¹³ TIM is now looking towards the municipal elections, which should take place in October, to increase its power across Madagascar and reduce that of Rajoelina and his allies. Rajoelina and his political allies are likely to do well in the municipal elections, mirroring their success in the legislative elections. Ravalomanana will work to try to improve TIM’s standing in the municipal elections, but is likely to save funding and time concentrating on the big prize: the next presidential elections. This strategy could be Ravalomanana’s downfall, as Rajoelina will in the interim control all political levels in Madagascar, greatly improving his chances for re-election if he brings about much needed economic development throughout the country.

During the conference, a leader of the TIM deputies, **Hanitra Razafimanantsoa**, proposed that Ravalomanana should run for the mayor of Antananarivo.¹⁴ Marc Ravalomanana’s wife, **Lalao**, is the current Antananarivo mayor.¹⁵ Ravalomanana is unlikely to do this. As official opposition leader, he will have the same protocol rank as the national assembly vice-president, which will give him and TIM more visibility as he looks to unseat Rajoelina in 2023.¹⁶

Amnesty International calls for end to killings and torture by security forces

Human rights NGO **Amnesty International** said on 26 June that the Malagasy government must take action to end a culture of impunity for killings and torture by security forces.¹⁷ Rajoelina made some optimistic campaign promises to deal with cattle rustlers using technology, but the issue of security force torture and killings will require that his administration provide better training for security forces and more opportunities in rural areas. Amnesty International’s call is unlikely to affect Madagascar’s aid or foreign relationships as donors will adopt a ‘wait and see’ approach with newly installed President Rajoelina. However, Rajoelina should use this call to raise the priority of the government’s response to cattle rustling, as it will become a larger problem if not dealt with early in his term.

According to Amnesty International’s regional director for **Southern Africa, Deprose Muchena**, Malagasy police and military forces have used torture and killings to stop cattle rustlers, particularly in rural areas.¹⁸ Muchena says that

“... in the past few years, we have seen a spike in cases of torture against cattle rustlers, and sometimes gruesome killings. However these acts have gone unpunished, fuelling impunity.”¹⁹

¹¹ RFI Africa, 15 Jul 2019

¹² RFI Africa, 15 Jul 2019

¹³ Madagascar Tribune, 16 Jul 2019

¹⁴ RFI Africa, 15 Jul 2019

¹⁵ RFI Africa, 15 Jul 2019

¹⁶ RFI Africa, 5 Jul 2019

¹⁷ Amnesty International, 26 Jun 2019

¹⁸ Amnesty International, 26 Jun 2019

¹⁹ Amnesty International, 26 Jun 2019

Amnesty International detailed several cases where security forces burned down or looted villages in order to find cattle rustlers or thieves, including one case of three men arrested for stealing firearms on 20 May who were found tied up and drowned in the **Onive River** near **Ampitatafika** town on 31 May.²⁰ There was no follow up investigation into the deaths of the three men.²¹

President Rajoelina has not commented on Amnesty International's report, but did commit during the election campaign to stop cattle rustlers, or *dahalo*, by implanting trackers in the prized zebu cows.²² Rajoelina also plans to improve the military forces' capability to fight the dahalo, which has evolved into an industrial-scale gangster operation.²³ Rajoelina has not said how he will fund these initiatives and it is unlikely that the government can afford trackers for every cow or to significantly upgrade the military's capacity to fight cattle rustlers. Currently, the military fights the dahalo from 1960s-era **Alouette II** helicopters which the **French** military discarded. Rajoelina would be better off using the funds to create employment opportunities in rural areas rather than re-outfitting the military.

Planner

October 2019 (**Madagascar**) Municipal elections scheduled
2023 Potential presidential elections

Chronology

24 Jul 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Orange*. Prime minister **Christian Ntsay** names his 22-member cabinet;

23 Jul 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Afrique Panorama*. The **World Bank's** \$30m funding allows the **Institut national de la statistique** to purchase 30 all-terrain vehicles to conduct its work;

19 Jul 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Jeune Afrique*. President **Andry Rajoelina** re-appoints **Christian Ntsay** as prime minister;

18 Jul 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Jeune Afrique*. The national assembly unanimously elects former justice minister **Christine Razanamahasoa** as speaker;

17 Jul 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *The West*. Mines and strategic resources minister **Fidiniavo Ravokatra** gives his full support to **Australia**-based mining company, **BlackEarth Minerals**, to fast-track its **Maniry** graphite project;

14 Jul 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *RFI Afrique*. Former president **Marc Ravalomanana** pledges to continue to lead the opposition while supporters push him to run for **Antananarivo** mayor, for which elections could take place in mid-October;

27 Jun 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express Madagascar*. A stampede at **Mahamasina** stadium kills 16 people during independence day celebrations;

25 Jun 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Citizen*. **Amnesty International** calls on the government to end torture and killings of citizens by security forces;

24 Jun 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *euronews*. **China**-based **China Nonferrous Metal Mining Group** signs a non-binding agreement with **Singapore**-based **ISR Capital** to work as a contractor at a **Madagascar** mine;

²⁰ Amnesty International, 26 Jun 2019

²¹ Amnesty International, 26 Jun 2019

²² News24, 27 Dec 2018

²³ Foreign Policy, 14 Feb 2019

24 Jun 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar) Afrik21. France-based energy company Trysbas Energy** partners with the government to construct three 50 megawatt solar power plants over the next five years.

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