

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Madagascar Monthly Briefing January 2020

#### Madagascar Summary 15 January 2020

*The Cour d'appel de Madagascar (appeal court) dismisses opposition party Tiako I Madagasikara's (TIM) accusations of electoral fraud, urging it to accept its defeat and support the ruling Isika Rehetra Miaraka amin-i Andry Rajoelina (IRD) party. Security indices caution Madagascar to be aware of the potential impact of Iran-United States tensions on the African continent. Madagascar ranks 82<sup>nd</sup> on the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index 2019 but organised crime indices show a troubling pattern. Efforts to strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific may increase in 2020. A United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report shows improvements in Madagascar's humanitarian situation over 2019; a total of 7.2 million Malagasy children were vaccinated for measles in 2019. New cases have significantly decreased and no deaths have been reported since April 2019.*

#### Court rules on opposition's accusations of electoral fraud

The **Cour d'appel de Madagascar** (appeal court) has dismissed claims made against the mayoral candidate of the ruling **Isika Rehetra Miaraka amin-i Andry Rajoelina (IRD)** party, **Naina Andriantsitohaina**, after hearing electoral disputes in the municipality of **Antananarivo**.<sup>1</sup> The court ruled that there was insufficient evidence to support the accusations of the opposition **Tiako I Madagasikara (TIM)** of voting irregularities and fraud during the November 2019 municipal elections.<sup>2</sup> However, the court acknowledged that there is cause for concern in some other municipalities. In the **Antenimbe** commune (**Arivonimamo** district) the local court heard evidence supporting claims that all voting operations were canceled due to irregularities in the voting manifest.<sup>3</sup> The **Toamasina** local court for the municipality of **Moramanga** likewise presented claims of irregularities with the voting manifest.<sup>4</sup> Other districts that have voiced their frustration at the municipal elections include the **Ambohimanga-Rova** commune and the **Antananarivo-Avardrano** district, where three polling stations were canceled on the day of the elections: the municipality of **Analaoa** (**Anjozorobe** district), the **Ambano** commune, and the **Antsirabe** district.<sup>5</sup>

Malagasy law allows for elections to be contested and investigated for 120 days after the election date.<sup>6</sup> The allegations of electoral fraud and resulting uncertainty are detrimental to Madagascar's political and economic growth. The **Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** will need to ensure that partial elections are allowed to take place within the requisite 120 days if necessary, in order to promote transparency and safeguard democracy.

#### Iran-US tensions may impact Madagascar ...

The **United States (US)** launched a so-called 'pre-emptive' missile attack in **Iraq** on 3 January, killing seven people<sup>7</sup>, including the head of **Iran's Quds Force**, General **Qasem Soleimani**, and Iraqi commander, **Abu Mahdi al Muhandis**.<sup>8</sup> While Madagascar's geographic location as an island off the

<sup>1</sup> MadagascarTribune, 9 Jan 2020

<sup>2</sup> MadagascarTribune, 9 Jan 2020

<sup>3</sup> MadagascarTribune, 9 Jan 2020

<sup>4</sup> MadagascarTribune, 9 Jan 2020

<sup>5</sup> MadagascarTribune, 9 Jan 2020

<sup>6</sup> MadagascarTribune, 9 Jan 2020

<sup>7</sup> The New York Times, 4 Jan 2020

<sup>8</sup> CNN International, 3 Jan 2020

coast of **East Africa** makes the island state a less obvious target in potential retaliation, businesses and investors should be aware of Madagascar's rank in current security indices and ensure that security measures and checks are in place to ward off or respond to potential terrorist activities.

Terrorism indicators paint a relatively reassuring picture of Madagascar's vulnerability to terrorism. Ranked 82<sup>nd</sup> in the **Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index 2019**, Madagascar managed to improve its position by 10 places in 2019.<sup>9</sup> The index rates the **Impact of Terrorism** on a scale of 10-0, with 10 being a "very high" impact and 0 being "no impact".<sup>10</sup> Madagascar ranks at '2', meaning that there is a "very low" likelihood of terrorism having an impact.<sup>11</sup> However, given the current geopolitical tensions, general vigilance is nevertheless necessary in the context of the strained relations between Iran and the US.

Madagascar's score in the **Global Initiative's Africa Organised Crime Index 2019** highlights its problems with environmental crime, particularly in the endangered rosewood market. In 2019 Madagascar had a criminality score of 5.38, ranking it 21<sup>st</sup> in Africa. The Global Initiative report noted the negative influence of criminal markets on most aspects of society:

*"Foreign actors and state-embedded actors have a significant and spreading negative impact, due to their pervasive role throughout many criminal markets."<sup>12</sup>*

Madagascar performed worse on the Organised Crime Index with regard to resilience than the majority of African states, ranking 35<sup>th</sup> on the continent.<sup>13</sup> The Global Initiative report concluded that while Madagascar has the legislation and frameworks in place to deal with organised crime, corruption and poor economic stability have hindered the efficacy of these responses.

Given Madagascar's relative close geographic proximity to **South Africa**, it would do well to note the reaction from **Pretoria** to the US missile attack in Iraq. South Africa's President **Cyril Ramaphosa** (2018-present) has appeared to take a neutral approach to the events by neither responding immediately nor offering condolences.<sup>14</sup>

### ... but are efforts to strengthen Indo-Pacific cooperation set to increase?

Although details concerning December's talks about the **Scattered Islands** have been slow to make it to the media (see *ARC Briefing December 2019*), strategic alliances appear to be taking on increasing importance in **Indo-Pacific** geopolitics. **India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** has now included Madagascar and **Comoros** in its **Indian Ocean Region Division**, which monitors India's maritime neighbours including **Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles**.<sup>15</sup> Prior to this inclusion, Madagascar and Comoros fell under the MEA's **East and South Africa Division**. The change reflects growing interest in the strategic importance of the **Indian Ocean** islands within the framework of the Indo-Pacific. India's president, **Ram Nath Kovind** (2017-present) visited Madagascar in March 2018, while vice president **Venkaiah Naidu** visited Comoros in October 2019, with both countries signing agreements including a defence cooperation agreement.<sup>16</sup>

Madagascar and Comoros are member states of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** and **International Solar Alliance**. Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros, and **Reunion** (French territory) are collectively known as the **Vanilla Islands** and members of the **Indian Ocean Commission**.<sup>17</sup> Madagascar is the largest island among these countries with a population of 26

<sup>9</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2019, Institute for Economics and Peace, visionofhumanity.org

<sup>10</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2019, Institute for Economics and Peace, visionofhumanity.org

<sup>11</sup> Global Terrorism Index 2019, Institute for Economics and Peace, visionofhumanity.org

<sup>12</sup> Africa Organised Crime Index 2019, Global Initiative, globalinitiative.net

<sup>13</sup> Africa Organised Crime Index 2019, Global Initiative, globalinitiative.net

<sup>14</sup> ARC political analyst, South Africa

<sup>15</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, 26 Dec 2019

<sup>16</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, 26 Dec 2019

<sup>17</sup> ThePrint, 13 Jan 2020



million and spanning an area that is larger than France.<sup>18</sup> Madagascar is home to unique flora and fauna, with over 100 species of baobabs, lemurs, several species of frogs and chameleons.<sup>19</sup> Madagascar can leverage its strategic location and home to diverse collections, and gain from partnerships within the Indo-Pacific. Madagascar would benefit from participating in maritime security efforts in the larger Indian Ocean community – nearly 40% of India’s trade is conducted along the Indian Ocean Rim, making the safe passage of Indian ships paramount to India’s maritime interests.<sup>20</sup>

### UNICEF reports improved humanitarian situation

A **UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)** report published in December has indicated areas in which Madagascar has shown improvements in tackling humanitarian situations. The main humanitarian disaster for the country in the first half of 2019, the measles epidemic, was brought under control due to nationwide vaccination campaigns in which over 7.2 million children under the age of nine were vaccinated.<sup>21</sup> The number of new cases has significantly decreased and no deaths have been reported since April 2019.<sup>22</sup> **UNICEF Madagascar** is now concentrating its humanitarian responses on disaster risk reduction and on vulnerable people in drought-prone areas in the south that suffer from malnutrition and a lack of access to safe water. UNICEF reported that 106,644 people in the south gained access to safe water through water trucking and the rehabilitation of boreholes in 2019.<sup>23</sup>

Although these achievements are commendable, difficulties remain. In 2019 UNICEF Madagascar appealed for \$8.2m to meet the humanitarian needs of children and their families, but only secured 62%. The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**, the **Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)**, the **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)**, the **Government of Japan and the Measles and Rubella Initiative (MRI)** are the donors that contributed to that 62%. The gap in funding will provide some logistic challenges in responding quickly to emergencies that arise in 2020. UNICEF continues to advocate for provision in the sectors of education, child protection, water, sanitation and hygiene.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Carnegie, Endowment for Peace, 18 Dec 2019

<sup>19</sup> Carnegie, Endowment for Peace, 18 Dec 2019

<sup>20</sup> ThePrint, 13 Jan 2020

<sup>21</sup> Madagascar Country Office, Humanitarian Situation Report No.4, unicef.org, 16 Dec 2019

<sup>22</sup> ReliefWebIntl, 31 Dec 2019

<sup>23</sup> Madagascar Country Office, Humanitarian Situation Report No.4, unicef.org, 16 Dec 2019

<sup>24</sup> ReliefWebIntl, 31 Dec 2019

## Planner

3-6 Feb 2020 **Cape Town (South Africa)** Investing in Africa Mining Indaba;  
 28 Feb 2020 **(Madagascar)** Municipal electoral results expected to be released;  
 19-23 Apr 2020 **Gaborone (Botswana)** **Forbes** to host the first **Under 30 Africa Summit** in Botswana;  
 26 Jun 2020 **(Madagascar)** Independence Day;  
 2023 **(Madagascar)** Potential presidential elections;

## Chronology

15 Jan 2020 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *TheDispatch*. **India's** ambassador, **Abhay Kumar**, donates over 100,000 academic textbooks to Madagascar's higher education and scientific research minister, **Blanche Nirina Richard**, for the development of higher education and research in Madagascar;

14 Jan 2020 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *MadagascarTribune*. President **Andry Rajoelina** calls for candidates to apply for senior official, managerial and expert positions;

13 Jan 2020 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *AllAfrica*. Deforestation threatens the **Eleonora's Falcon**, a species of migratory falcon named after a **Sardinian** judge who protected it 700 years ago from deforestation;

12 Jan 2020 **London (United Kingdom)** *OneGreenPlanet*. **British** journal **Nature Climate Change** has found that by 2070 all of Madagascar's rainforests will be gone due to climate change and deforestation;

3 Jan 2020 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *RFIAfrique*. Former Malagasy president **Hery Rajaonarimampianina** announces his return to politics but has not said if he will run for the 2023 presidential elections;

19 Dec 2019 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Bloomberg*. Madagascar's largest employer, **Groupe Filatex**, is completing solar power plants in four cities to boost access and availability to electricity in a joint venture with **Canada**-based **DERA Energy** with plans to install another 50 megawatts in 2020 with panels supplied by **Canada**-based **Solar Inc.**



### About Africa Risk Consulting:

**Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)** is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

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