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President Hery Rajaonarimampianina (2013-present) appoints Jean Ravelonarivo as prime minister. Ravelonarivo announces a new cabinet with most ministers reappointed from the cabinet of immediate former prime minister Roger Kolo. Mines ministry, civil society and extractive industry stakeholders review the draft mining code. Kidnappers abduct French and Portuguese nationals in Toliara and Antananarivo.

Rajaonarimampianina appoints Jean Ravelonarivo as prime minister

President **Hery Rajaonarimampianina** (2013-present) appointed air commodore **Jean Ravelonarivo** as prime minister on 25 January. He replaces immediate past prime minister **Roger Kolo**. Political watchers describe Ravelonarivo's new government as "*the same team with a new coach*"; there are only eight new cabinet ministers with the remaining 22 coming from the previous Kolo cabinet.² Kolo's government had resigned on 12 January, under heavy public criticism for its failure to address economic issues and repeated electricity shortages.³

*"It is known that the new prime minister is a childhood friend, comrade, school mate and former governor of the same **Rotary Club** as Rajaonarimampianina and his wife **Voahanagy Rajaonarimampianina**. Therefore members of the public are claiming that the first lady pushed for his appointment."*⁴

The eight new ministers are:

- Foreign minister **Beatrice Attalah**. She also holds the presidency of the **Commission Electorale Nationale Independante de la Transition (CÉNIT)**;
- Finance minister **Francois Maurice Gervais Rakotoarimanana**;
- Health minister **Mamy Andriamanarivo**;
- Commerce and consumer affairs minister **Henri Rabesahala**;
- Culture minister **Brigitte Rasamoely**;
- Population, women and social protection minister **Onitiana Realy**;
- Environment minister **Beboarimisa Ralava**;
- Communication minister **Vonison Andrianjato**.⁵

Reappointed ministers include:

- State minister for infrastructure **Rivo Rakotovao**;
- Presidency minister for mines and petroleum **Lalaharisaina Joeli Valerian**;
- Defence minister **Rakotozafy Dominique Jean Olivier**;
- Justice minister **Noeline Ramanantenasoa**;
- Decentralisation minister **Olivier Solonandrasana**;
- Police and public security minister **Richard Blaise Randimbsoa**;

¹ Source, political analyst, Antananarivo

² Source, political analyst, Antananarivo

³ AFP, 14 Jan 2015.

⁴ Source, political analyst, Antananarivo

⁵ Unless otherwise note – Source, political analyst, Antananarivo.

- Economy and planning minister **Herilanto Raveloharison**;
- Agriculture minister **Rolland Ravatomanga**;
- Education minister **Paul Rabary Andrianiaina**;
- Industry minister **Narson Rafidimanana**;
- Public works minister **Roland Iarovana Ratsiraka**;
- Public service minister **Jean de Dieu Maharante**;
- Tourism and transport minister **Jacques Ulrich Andriantiana**;
- Energy minister **Horace Gatien**;
- High education minister **Marie Monique Rasoazanaera**;
- Fisheries minister **M. Ahmad**;
- Water minister **Johanita Bénédicte Ndahimananjara**;
- Livestock minister **Anthelme Ramparany**;
- Post, telecommunications and technology minister **Rakotomamonjy André Neypatraiky**;
- Vocational training minister **Benjamina Ramanantsoa**;
- Youth and sports minister **Jean Anicet Andriamosarisoa**;
- Defence ministry state secretary for the national defence forces **Didier Gerard Paza**.⁶

On 12 February the Ravelonarivo government presented an eight point action plan to parliament to guide the work of the new cabinet.⁷

1. Strengthening the rule of law, the constitutional state and good governance: The government aims to strengthen the authority of the state and revive the institutions through the consolidation of the ethics code and professional conduct. It also pledges to increase public confidence through the independence of the justice system and enhance the fight against corruption.
2. The economic recovery with sustainable and inclusive development: Increased access to credit and the development of a draft law on public-private partnerships are two of the new government's goals. It also seeks to promote the value of the **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)** to enhance investment and employment. Other goals include increased promotional activities in the tourism sector, rehabilitation of roads to give access to resources and movement of people, and improved port facilities. The government will focus on promoting the provision of lower cost energy to support economic growth, as well as the access of electricity and water, promoting renewable energy and construction of hydro-electric centrals.
3. The promotion of social development: The new government plans to pass legislation to protect employees, and in particular fight against child labour. Rehabilitation of basic health centres and access to public health services are also social development targets. The new government will also focus on skills development and capacity building of teachers, as well as decreasing the rate of illiteracy.
4. Strengthening security: This is a priority for the government in both urban and rural areas, particularly the eradication of the phenomenon '*dahalo*' or kidnap for ransom (see below).
5. An environmental policy for sustainable development: The government pledges its participation in promoting **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** initiatives such as the creation of new protected areas. It has also said it will dismiss all public officials known for trafficking rosewood, and will improve the management and control of the precious wood, including the establishment of a special court. It will also promote the use of biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel.

⁶ Unless otherwise note – Source, political analyst, Antananarivo.

⁷ Unless otherwise note – Source, political analyst, Antananarivo.

6. Diplomacy for development: The new government seeks political and economic diplomacy that will be capable of defending Malagasy interests, attracting investors and reconnecting with diaspora.
7. Effective and harmonious decentralisation: Included in this goal is a territorial plan and capacity building for elected authorities that will have their own budget.
8. National reconciliation and promotion of national identity for unity: The first phase of national reconciliation was held in Antananarivo (see *ARC Madagascar January 2015 Briefing*) The next step is to follow up with regional conference for input from the public on the reconciliation process.

Mines ministry, civil society and extractive industry review draft mining code

The mines ministry, civil society organisations (CSOs), and **Chamber of Mines (CoM)** reviewed the first draft of the new mining code in a private session on 19 February.⁸ The main outcome of the first meeting was that the new draft mining code still requires significant modification and is not seen as an improvement on the existing code.

*“The extractive sector is a strategic part of the Malagasy economy yet there is a great deal of illegal operations and smuggling. Therefore it is really important for the government to improve the legal framework, which governs the sector. The government must also develop a new system for the payment and collection of royalties, improve the **Institut de Gemmologie de Madagascar (IGM)** and redefine the role of the **Bureau du Cadastre Minier de Madagascar (BCMM)**...”⁹*

The CSOs that took part in the review said there was no consideration of social issues with regard to the social licence to operate (SLO) in the new draft code, and asked the for the new mining code to establish an oversight body as an SLO watchdog for the extractive sector.¹⁰ The CoM said the new draft code is “*totally contradictory*” with the objective of enhancing the investment environment.

“... foreign direct investment (FDI) will not come to Madagascar with all the conditions written in the draft, no one knows exactly what this reform is for...”¹¹”

Both the CoM and the CSOs agree that the new reformed mining code is necessary to attract FDI to Madagascar and create conditions that will reduce the high levels of corruption in the extractive sector. However, they also agreed that the current law is not necessarily the problem. They claim the enforcement and application of the law is the problem.¹²

French citizen kidnapped

Kidnap for ransom, known as ‘*dahalo*’, remains a security concern in Madagascar with recent kidnaps for ransom reported in **Toliara** and **Antananarivo**.¹³ The **French** ambassador to Madagascar, **Francois Goldblatt**, announced on 21 February that kidnappers released a 12-year-old French boy named **Houssein Anvaraly** after they abducted him three days earlier outside his school in Toliara.¹⁴

The French embassy has not given details of the incident, but the kidnappers released the boy unharmed. The boy is of **Asian** descent. Over the years a number of high profile kidnap for ransom abductions have occurred in Madagascar, particularly targeting business people and other wealthy people of Asian descent,¹⁵ including the **Indio-Pakistani** community.¹⁶

⁸ Source, political analyst, Antananarivo.

⁹ Source, mining industry consultant, Antananarivo.

¹⁰ Source, mining industry consultant, Antananarivo.

¹¹ Source, CoM member, Antananarivo.

¹² Source, political analyst, Antananarivo

¹³ Source, political analyst, Antananarivo

¹⁴ AP, 21 Feb 2015.

¹⁵ AP, 21 Feb 2015.

The threat of kidnap for ransom is not new in Madagascar. Since January 2014 armed men have kidnapped at least three foreign nationals in Antananarivo.¹⁷ In January 2012 armed men kidnapped a businessperson of south Asian decent in Antananarivo.¹⁸ Two weeks later, a French businessperson and two Malagasy businesspeople suffered the same fate.¹⁹

Rajaonarimampianina is under pressure to deal with a perception of rising insecurity, particularly with regard to kidnap for ransom. The new government has promised to address this problem directly as part of its eight-point action plan (see above).

Implications

The new Ravelonarivo cabinet does not represent a significant change from the previous Kolo cabinet. Hence, the new prime minister is unlikely to have any impact on the existing direction of the Rajaonarimampianina's presidency. The same issues will exist and the public will continue to call for concrete and visible actions to address day-to-day economic issues.

Madagascar is in the process of developing a new mining code. The open debate between the mines ministry, CSOs and extractive sector companies bodes well for the eventual adoption of a new mining law that will attract more FDI and reduce corruption in the extractive sector.

The threat of kidnap for ransom remains a concern for wealthy nationals and foreigners alike in Madagascar. Locals and foreign business people are advised to keep a low profile, not to show overt signs of wealth, and to increase security precautions when travelling in and around larger urban centres.

¹⁶ www.osac.gov

¹⁷ www.gov.uk

¹⁸ La Gazette, 13 Jan 2012.

¹⁹ La Gazette, 26 Jan 2012.