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Madagascar Summary 16 July 2024

The Haut Cour Constitutionnelle (HCC) (constitutional court) announces the final results of the Assemblée Nationale (national assembly) election and essentially restores the ruling Isika Rehetra Miaraka amin'i Andry Rajoelina's (IRD) legislative majority. The opposition is responding to their poor electoral performance by organising a new coalition arrangement. Prime minister Christian Ntsay resigns on 10 July and is subsequently reappointed on 12 July. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) approves two new Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF) funding arrangements for Madagascar. A vigilante mob kills two people in Sofia region on 4 July.

Constitutional court restores ruling coalition's majority...

The **Haut Cour Constitutionnelle (HCC)** (constitutional court) announced the final results of the 29 May **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) election on 27 June, restoring the ruling **Isika Rehetra Miaraka amin'i Andry Rajoelina (IRD)** party's legislative majority.¹ Under the interim results the **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (electoral commission) released on 11 June, the IRD only won 80 of the 163 seats in the national assembly (see *ARC Briefing Madagascar Jun 2024*). However, in its final audit and arbitration of the election results, the HCC overturned five races, four of which were to the IRD's benefit. As such, the IRD has 84 seats in the national assembly and all opposition parties won 29 seats combined, 22 of which were secured by the main opposition coalition, the **Firaisankina Platform**.²

Notably, independent candidates won 50 seats in the legislature, but on 3 July, a group of 45 of these candidates publicly declared their support for President **Andry Rajoelina** (2018-present).³ Accordingly, Rajoelina now has the declared support of 129 of the 163 members of parliament (MPs) which equates to approximately 79% of the national assembly. Rajoelina retains complete control of Madagascar's parliament and will have no trouble passing his legislative agenda. This is a remarkable outcome for Rajoelina, especially given the fact that the IRD performed much worse in the election than forecast.

Rajoelina's continued dominance of Malagasy politics appears to have also forced the opposition to rethink its strategic approach once again. Indicative of this was the revelation that Firaisankina Platform is set to be dissolved (see below).

...as a new opposition platform emerges

Opposition **Hery Vaovao Ho an'i Madagasikara (HVM)** president **Rivo Rakotovo** announced on 6 July that the Firaisankina Platform will be dissolved. He made this statement at a rally held by Madagascar's largest opposition party, **Tiako I Madagasikara (TIM)**, in **Antananarivo (Analamanga Region)**.⁴ According to Rakotovo, the Firaisankina Platform is set to be replaced by a new coalition called **Firaisambe**, which comprises the TIM, HVM, **Antoko Politika Madio (APM)**, and **Pro-Siteny** opposition parties. These are essentially the same parties which comprised the Firaisankina Platform.

¹ 2424, 27 Jun 2024

² 2424, 27 Jun 2024

³ L'Express, 4 Jul 2024

⁴ Midi-Madagasikara, 9 Jul 2024

Rakotovoao claimed that this would be a broader alliance but as, yet it is unclear if this really is the case or whether it is just a rebranding exercise by these allied opposition parties. The creation of this new coalition poses similar challenges as the previous alliance. Primarily, it is unclear what new offerings these parties have to attract disenchanted voters or peel away support from the IRD. Secondly, a newly branded alliance will once again have to introduce itself to voters and build enthusiasm ahead of the upcoming local government elections. The elections are scheduled for 6 November.

The Firaisankina Platform was criticised for only forming three months before the national assembly elections and the Firaisambe is being formed only four months before the more complex local government elections. Accordingly, this new alliance is not expected to perform much better in November.

Prime minister resigns and is reappointed

While Madagascar's opposition is seeking means to reinvent itself for the next election, the IRD-dominated national assembly has elected its new office bearers and committee heads. The formation of a new national assembly also mandated that the council of ministers be dissolved and that prime minister **Christian Ntsay** resign from office which he did on 10 July.⁵ This was required under Malagasy law so that the cabinet could be drawn from the national assembly.

Unsurprisingly, Rajoelina reappointed Ntsay as prime minister on 12 July.⁶ This was expected as the president had also re-appointed Ntsay in January after he had resigned following Rajoelina's re-inauguration – a move that was also in line with standard practice in Madagascar.

Rajoelina and Ntsay work well together. Furthermore, the prime minister is widely liked and respected by Madagascar's international investment and aid partners. The decision to retain Ntsay will have signalled to these partners that Rajoelina intends to maintain policy consistency and governance direction.

The two leaders will now work together to appoint a new council of ministers. The new cabinet is expected to be largely the same as the one appointed in January following Rajoelina's re-election. However, there will be at least five changes to the cabinet as four former ministers were appointed to senior offices within the national assembly and technical education minister **Lalotiana Rakotondrazafy** lost her parliamentary election.⁷ As a result, new ministers are expected in the interior; communication and culture; population and social protection; national education; and technical education and vocational training ministries.

Rajoelina has indicated that he is in no haste to announce his new cabinet and such the new council of ministers is not expected before the end of July. In the meantime, the previous incumbents will continue to serve on an interim basis.

IMF approves new funding arrangements

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** executive board on 21 June approved two new funding arrangements with Madagascar - a \$337m **Extended Credit Facility (ECF)** and a \$321m arrangement under the **Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)**.⁸ The board also approved the immediate disbursement of a tranche payment of \$48m from the ECF.

The ECF provides medium-term financial assistance to low-income countries with protracted balance of payments problems and is among the key tools the IMF uses to provide support to these countries. ECF funding is provided via a series of tranche payments that are dependent on the relevant state meeting pre-agreed reform and governance benchmarks. Madagascar is heavily dependent on ECF funding to help finance its budget and development.

⁵ L'Express 11 July 2024

⁶ Madagascar Tribune, 13 Jun 2024

⁷ Midi Madagasikara, 13 Jul 2024

⁸ IMF, 21 Jun 2024

The RSF provides affordable long-term financing to countries undertaking reforms to reduce risks to prospective balance of payments stability, including those related to climate change and pandemic preparedness. This is a comparatively new tool of the IMF and one that could really benefit Madagascar given that the country is considered highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The new ECF programme is a 36-month arrangement and is set to provide financial support to Madagascar until June 2027. This arrangement was approved following the conclusion of Madagascar's previous 40-month ECF agreement which was signed in 2021 and was worth \$312.4m.

In its announcement, the executive board highlighted the need for Madagascar to focus on stabilising its general government debt to below 60% of GDP. This will require continued reforms and improvements at the state-owned utility company, **Jirama**, which is currently a major burden on the country's fiscal balance.

To rectify this Madagascar will also need to enhance its revenue mobilisation and improve collection rates. In addition, the IMF noted that the Malagasy government affirmed its commitment to strengthening governance, transparency, and the fight against corruption, continuing the implementation of the interest rate targeting operational monetary policy framework, and building resilience, especially through stronger social safety nets. This confirmed that the new ECF programme will continue the same benchmarks and goals as the previous arrangement. However, this new arrangement is expected to place increased emphasis on combatting corruption and support the government's planned new anti-corruption strategy.

The \$48m tranche payment that was approved on 21 June will help finance Madagascar's budget, and its ongoing reforms, as well as help capitalise the government foreign exchange account. Madagascar will also particularly welcome the additional financial support from the RSF. The country is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and is already experiencing tropical storms of greater intensity and frequent drought conditions in the southern regions.

The planned RSF-supported reforms reinforce climate governance in Madagascar and ensure that climate issues are incorporated into mainstream public financial and investment management processes. They should also strengthen adaptation to climate change and resilience against natural disasters, curb the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, reinforce the protection of forests and biodiversity, and mobilise climate finance.

Vigilante mob kills two in Sofia region

A vigilante mob killed two people in the **Tsiningia** district of **Boriziny (Sofia Region)** on 4 July.⁹ The incident occurred after the two men were accused of being responsible for the 18 June murder of a woman in the district. After this accusation was made, a mob rapidly formed and beat the two men to death and burnt their bodies. A second mob affiliated with the victims attempted to stage a revenge attack on 6 July leading to clashes between the two communities which local police eventually dispersed.

Such incidents of vigilante justice have become a common occurrence in Madagascar, especially in the country's more rural areas. Individuals accused of being behind criminal acts are frequently lynched. These mobs have even been known to storm police stations to lynch suspects.

This vigilantism is rooted in the widespread lack of faith in Madagascar's justice system. Communities do not trust the police to adequately investigate crimes, nor do they trust that these criminals will be properly tried and prosecuted even if they are caught. As a result, communities seek to take matters into their own hands. Unsurprisingly, such vigilantism is most common in rural districts where law enforcement is worse resourced. Madagascar is unlikely to effectively reform or improve its justice system in the foreseeable future and as such, such vigilante acts are expected to remain a regular occurrence.

⁹ 2424, 7 Jul 2024

Planner

6 Nov 2024 **Madagascar** Municipal elections;

Chronology

16 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi-Madagasikara*. The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (electoral commission) confirms that it has tentatively scheduled the upcoming local elections for 6 November;

16 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *2424*. Officials from the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** urge Madagascar for increased clarity on how the **Malagasy Sovereign Fund (FSM)** will function;

15 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi-Madagasikara*. **Indian Ocean Commission** appoints Madagascar's **Edgard Razafindravahy** as its next secretary general;

13 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Madagascar Tribune*. The **European Union (EU)** commits EUR 149,750 (\$162,898) towards a project to computerise Madagascar's judicial system;

12 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi-Madagasikara*. Former interior minister **Justin Tokely** is elected as the new **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president;

12 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi-Madagasikara*. **Richard Rafidison** is reappointed as the new governor of **Atsinanana** region;

11 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi-Madagasikara*. New **European Union (EU)** ambassador to Madagascar **Roland Kobia** arrives in Antananarivo;

10 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. The state-owned water and electricity company, **Jirama**, reveals that it currently has a debt burden of around MGA 1.5 trillion (\$330m);

7 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *2424*. The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) 2024 World Investment Report** reveals that Madagascar recorded \$415m in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in 2023 down from \$468m recorded in 2022;

6 Jul 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi-Madagasikara*. The **Tiako I Madagasikara (TIM)** opposition party holds a rally at the **Magro Tanjombato** grounds in Antananarivo;

6 Jul 2024 **Vangaindrano (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. Police forcibly disperse a protest by supporters of opposition member of parliament (MP) **Sylvestre Mahavitara** in **Atsimo-Atsinanana** region calling for the MP's release from jail;

23 Jun 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *AfricaNews*. President **Andry Rajoelina** (2018-present) officially inaugurates the new cable car public transport system in Antananarivo which is set to enter commercial operations in early 2025;

21 Jun 2024 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. The **Bureau National de Gestion des Risques et des Catastrophes (BNGRC)** (national bureau of risk and disaster management) reveals that it expects the recovery and rebuilding operations from **Tropical Storm Gamane** which impacted Madagascar in March to cost over \$120m.

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