

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Madagascar Monthly Briefing December 2025

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#### Madagascar Summary 12 December 2025

*Thierry Rakotonarivo replaces Arsène Dama as head of the Commission électorale nationale indépendante (CENI) (independent national electoral commission). Rakotonarivo announces plans to reform CENI and investigate alleged irregularities in Madagascar's electoral register. The government confirms that it is preparing to criminally charge and prosecute former president Andry Rajoelina (2019-2025) and potentially even seek his extradition. The concertation nationale (national consultation) officially begins, overseen by the influential Fiombonan'ny Fiangonana Kristiana eto Madagasikara (FFKM) (Council of Christian Churches of Madagascar). The organisers are still establishing a framework on which to run this process. The National Assembly passes the 2026 finance bill, an essential step towards funding the government in the coming year.*

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#### New electoral commission head elected

The permanent bureau of the **Commission électorale nationale indépendante (CENI) (independent national electoral commission)** [elected](#) **Thierry Rakotonarivo** as the commission's new president on 9 December. Rakotonarivo replaces former CENI president **Arsène Dama**, who resigned the position and has taken up an advisory role in the institution. Although Dama officially resigned voluntarily from the position, it was evident that he was pushed out. **Madagascar's** interim government has made it clear that fundamentally reforming CENI is among its main priorities. Accordingly, Dama's position has been viewed as untenable ever since the 14 October military coup.

Rakotonarivo's election as the new head of CENI was considered a *fait accompli* after he was [appointed](#) as the second vice president of the CENI permanent bureau on 2 December. The **Assemblée nationale** (national assembly), with the backing of the **Council of Ministers**, appointed him to this role. Notably, Rakotonarivo had previously served as CENI vice-president but was dismissed from the commission in 2020 after publicly [claiming](#) that over a million duplicate national identity cards had been used in the 2018 presidential election. This was the election that returned former president Andry Rajoelina (2019-2025) to power. If Rakotonarivo's allegations were accurate, it would have meant that Rajoelina's election was illegitimate. Rakotonarivo has stated that he intends to investigate these alleged duplicates and pursue legal action against all officials found to be complicit in the alleged electoral fraud.

The new CENI president has maintained his position that the 2018 election was marred by duplicate voters and that the country's electoral roll is inaccurate. [According to Rakotonarivo](#), CENI has now asked the **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)** (international organisation of **French-speaking countries**) to carry out a complete audit of Madagascar's electoral lists. This request for external assistance is reportedly to ensure that the audit is done accurately and transparently. In pursuit of this, CENI has [suspended](#) its own annual revision of the electoral register, which was meant to begin on 1 December.

Rakotonarivo [has also made it clear](#) that he has been mandated to drive substantive structural reforms at CENI. In addition to auditing and overhauling the electoral register, Rakotonarivo wants to reassess how Madagascar organises elections and address what he views as failures in the current system, including officials campaigning while in office and wealth inequality between candidates. As the new head of CENI, Rakotonarivo will also be tasked with implementing any proposed changes that emerge from Madagascar's planned national dialogue and the government's own reform agenda.

Dama's removal and Rakotonarivo's appointment are the latest move by the government to strip any influence Rajoelina may still have in the state. Thus far, the new head of CENI has made the right statements in pledging to address alleged electoral fraud, strengthen CENI, and seek external support to audit the electoral lists. However, the way in which the sitting government pushed him into the position will raise questions about his long-term independence as CENI president and whether he will favour President **Michael Randrianirina** (2025-present) in future elections.

### Government to seek international arrest warrant for Rajoelina

Confirming the new government's desire to both dismantle Rajoelina's influence and target the former president himself, justice minister **Fanirisoa Ernaivo** [announced](#) on 2 December that the government intended to prosecute Rajoelina and would soon seek an international arrest warrant for the former president. According to Ernaivo, prosecutors are already preparing the case against Rajoelina, and will file formal charges before the end of the year, after which Madagascar will apply for an international arrest warrant. This likely means an **Interpol** red notice compelling foreign states to arrest and extradite Rajoelina to Madagascar.

Although Ernaivo has not revealed the exact details and charges that Rajoelina will face, officials have [indicated](#) that prosecutors are seeking to charge the former president with embezzlement and corruption. Authorities have further hinted that at least one investigation will centre on Rajoelina's relationship with controversial Malagasy businessman and his former advisor, **Mamy Ravatomanga**, who allegedly irregularly received lucrative state contracts from Rajoelina's government. Ravatomanga is [currently detained](#) in **Mauritius** on money laundering charges.

President Randrianirina [reaffirmed](#) the government's desire to prosecute Rajoelina in an interview published on 6 December. Randrianirina, however, also indicated that authorities will seek to prosecute Rajoelina with crimes related to the state's heavy-handed response to the anti-government unrest in September and October. Such charges would be welcomed by the youth-led groups that drove those protests.

Rajoelina is unlikely to be prosecuted in the foreseeable future. The former president is currently abroad and was last reported to be based in **Dubai (United Arab Emirates, (UAE))**, which has a history of resisting extradition requests. However, Malagasy authorities will continue to build their cases against Rajoelina, which will further discourage him from returning to Madagascar and potentially allow officials to pursue criminal prosecutions against his close allies and associates. This will both eliminate Rajoelina's remaining power base and potentially enable the state to retrieve some of the assets and funds allegedly embezzled during his presidency.

### National consultations officially begin

Randrianirina's government has continued to pursue its reform agenda, central to which is the holding of a national dialogue, referred to as the **concertation nationale**. This dialogue was officially [launched](#) on 10 September during a ceremony at the **Ivato International Conference Centre** in **Antananarivo**. The process is being led by the influential **Fiombonan'ny Fiangonana Kristiana eto Madagasikara (FFKM) (Council of Christian Churches of Madagascar)**, a union comprising the country's four largest Christian churches – namely, the **Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican** and **Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara (FJKM) (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar)**. An estimated 85% of Malagasy citizens are Christian, and as such, the FFKM is an influential social and political force in the country.

Requesting the FFKM to lead the national consultation was a savvy move by Randrianirina, as the group's perceived independence will lend credibility to the process both within and outside Madagascar. Furthermore, these churches already have the necessary infrastructure and community engagement required to drive such a process.

The national consultation is still in its nascent stages, with representatives from government, civil society, traditional leaders, and churches still formulating the dialogue's framework. However, once it

begins, the process is intended to seek input from communities and stakeholders across Madagascar on the country's most pressing concerns and the necessary reforms to address them. According to the government, this feedback will be used to formulate the state's reform agenda, which will be implemented over the coming two years.

[According](#) to prime minister **Herintsalama Rajaonarivelo**, this process will take at least six months. After this, the state will draft and implement the resulting reforms before putting a new constitution to a public referendum. The government will then organise new elections by the end of 2027.

This dialogue will be a test of the Randrianirina and Rajaonarivelo government, its commitment to public engagement, and its touted commitment to reforms. However, this will be a logistically difficult process and is likely to take longer than the six months planned, potentially leading to delays in the rest of the interim government's timetable, including the holding of elections.

### National Assembly passes 2026 budget

The **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly, lower legislative house) [passed](#) the 2026 finance law on 25 November, which authorises the government's budget for the coming year. The bill was passed with 24 amendments, most of which were backed by the new finance minister, **Herinjatovo Ramiarison**. Although the government and legislature have touted the bill as a "*reform budget*", Ramiarison was hamstrung by a lack of time, given that the budget process takes most of the year, and he was only appointed as minister on 28 October following the 14 October coup (*see ARC Brief Madagascar Nov 2025*). As such, the government is expected to introduce a substantial budget amendment bill in the coming year, likely during the mid-year budget review.

The new budget [prioritises](#) health, education and infrastructure spending and introduces tax relief for consumers. However, there is no operational subsidy for state-owned utility company **Jirama**. This is noteworthy, as the repeated power and water disruptions were a major driver of the September/October unrest that precipitated the October coup. As such, energy sector reforms and additional funding are expected to be introduced in the coming year.

The budget itself is largely unremarkable, given that it was largely drafted under the previous administration. It is more important that it is passed as, under Malagasy law, the finance bill needs to be passed and signed into law by 31 December in order for the government to be funded in the new year. The bill is expected to easily pass the **Senate** and be signed by Randrianirina by that date.

### A look at 2026

Madagascar's upcoming year will be dominated by the government's continued efforts to assert its authority over the state and push its reform agenda. This will include major staffing changes within the civil service, with particularly significant restructuring in the finance, justice and mining ministries. The national consultations are expected to gain steam as the months progress and will be a central feature of Madagascar's political developments in 2026; however, the extent to which this dialogue will actually influence the reform agenda remains to be seen. The dialogue is also expected to exceed its planned six-month timeframe.

Randrianirina's government will continue to purge Rajoelina loyalists from the government. This effort will primarily take place in the form of corruption investigations. Given the high levels of corruption in Madagascar, prosecutors should not struggle to achieve this.

Madagascar will continue its ongoing diplomatic offensive, particularly towards major donors and financial partners such as **France**, the **European Union (EU)** and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. The IMF is expected to make a decision in January on whether or not to continue its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement with Madagascar. The loss of ECF funding would be a major blow to the new government, as Madagascar is heavily dependent on such external funding to drive its reforms and fund its budget. However, Ramiarison's proposed fiscal reforms and the wider anti-corruption agenda should help convince the IMF to maintain its support.

## Planner

28 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** Council of Ministers performance review;

## Chronology

10 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** 2424. The justice ministry issues a statement confirming that “any person who has lost Malagasy nationality is automatically removed from the electoral lists and loses all eligibility to stand for election [sic]” in a move clearly aimed at underscoring the fact that former president **Andry Rajoelina** will be barred from contesting any future elections;

6 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Madagascar Tribune*. President **Michael Randrianirina** and prime minister **Herintsalama Rajaonarivelo** visit the headquarters of national power and water utility **Jirama** to pressure the company’s executives to address utility disruptions;

6 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. Health officials reveal that they have recorded nearly 1,400 measles cases in 2025, raising concerns about a sustained outbreak of the disease;

5 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi Madagasikara*. The Council of Ministers approves the appointment of five military colonels to senior civil service security portfolios, including the head of the anti-corruption unit and the head of the intelligence service;

3 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Madagascar Tribune*. Justice minister **Farinsoa Ernaivo** meets with **Swiss** foreign minister **Franz Xaver Perrez** to discuss freezing illicit assets held by Malagasy nationals in **Switzerland**;

3 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Madagascar Tribune*. The **World Bank** confirms that it has continued to fund all its projects in Madagascar and is not currently considering suspending existing funding in response to the October coup d’état;

3 Dec 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. A **Chinese** national is arrested on charges of wildlife trafficking after being found in possession of 162 endangered tortoises;

29 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. President **Michael Randrianirina** speaks with **France’s** President **Emmanuel Macron** by phone, marking the first direct contact between the two men since Randrianirina seized power in October;

28 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Madagascar Tribune*. Finance minister **Herinjatovo Ramiarison** meets with representatives from the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** to discuss the ongoing financial support Madagascar receives from these institutions;

25 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. Officials reveal that food insecurity impacts over two million people in the **Atsimo Andrefana** region alone;

25 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *EWN*. President **Michael Randrianirina** reveals that he found a 300-kilogram gem rock, thought to contain emerald, in the presidential palace;

24 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Midi Madagasikara*. Madagascar is absent from the **7th European Union–African Union (EU-AU) Summit** as the AU suspended its membership following the October coup;

21 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *L'Express*. Authorities arrest three **Comoran** nationals on charges of illegally trafficking lemurs;

20 Nov 2025 **Port Louis (Mauritius)** *Midi Madagasikara*. **France’s** President **Emmanuel Macron** confirms that France continues to view Madagascar as a strategic partner despite the October military coup;

20 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi Madagasikara*. The **State Court** hears a petition filed by former Antananarivo mayoral candidate **Tojo Ravalomanana** challenging the election of Antananarivo mayor **Harilala Ramanantsoa**, alleging that the December 2024 municipal election was marred by fraud;

18 Nov 2025 **Antananarivo (Madagascar)** *Midi Madagasikara*. Major General **Matthew Trollinger**, chief of staff of the **United States (US) military's Africa Command (AFRICOM)**, concludes a five-day visit to Madagascar aimed at enhancing bilateral defence cooperation.

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Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com) or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

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