

RAVALOMANANA Marc

Former President of the Republic of Madagascar

Antananarivo August 16, 2019

Marc Ravalomanana
President of the Opposition Platform Rally for the Democracy
Antananarivo, Madagascar

To

Her Excellency Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax
Executive Secretary
SADC House, Plot n^o 54385
Central Business District, Private Bag 0095
Gaborone, Botswana

Excellency,

On Friday, August 16, 2019, a new alliance of opposition parties -- named "Rodoben'ny Mpanohitra ho an'ny Demokrasia eto Madagasikara" or RMDM, which means "Opposition Alliance for Democracy in Madagascar" -- was established and officially presented to the public at the Carlton Hotel. The alliance constitutes a counter power and aims to contribute to the social and economic development of Madagascar. I was elected leader of the opposition alliance RMDM.

The alliance of the opposition parties is committed to holding the current administration accountable to its promises, political and development decisions. We are also committed to implementing democracy, the rule of law and good governance for the benefits of the Malagasy people. The RMDM opposes the government's intention to violate the rights of the opposition parties to freely express their views and criticize government programs which are against the interests of Madagascar and its people.

Moreover, the alliance of the opposition will conduct an education program for the Malagasy people regarding democracy and the role of the opposition parties and provide information to the people on the unlawful and inappropriate decisions the government may take.

In the Freedom in the World 2018 report, Madagascar is classified as “Partly Free” with an aggregate score of 56 out of 100. Political rights, government corruption, and a lack of accountability are among the issues in the country.

Despite Madagascar’s Constitution, which recognizes and protects the right of the opposition parties, and the Law 2011-13 of September 9, 2011 on opposition status and opposition parties, the current government has the intention to restrict and silence the opposition parties by manipulating the Lower House of Parliament. A new bill n^o 01-2019/PL, sponsored by one member of the National Assembly (The Lower House) from the party in power, is under consideration to amend the existing law and silence the opposition parties, including the new alliance RMDM. In addition, the bill also aimed to eliminate myself as the leader of the opposition which is defined in the Law 2011-013. I would like to remind you that the law 2011-013 was crafted and promulgated during the transitional period 2009-2013 led by the same party currently in power, and during which I was exiled in South Africa.

Furthermore, during the 2018 presidential debates, the then-candidate Andry Rajoelina committed to recognizing myself as the leader of the opposition if he would be elected. There is no doubt I am the legitimate and legal leader of the opposition. Clearly, with the new bill, the current government does not have the intention to implement and enforce the existing law and respect the rule of law. The opposition parties are wondering whether the current administration has the intention to return to the use of police force to oppress and persecute those who express opposing views as it did during the transitional period.

Therefore, the RMDM categorically opposes the proposed amendments. We call upon the government to respect the rule of law, implement the Law 2011-013 without amendments, and publish its implementing decree. The RMDM also calls upon the international community, especially the SADC community, to support our efforts to transform Madagascar into a democratic country where the rule of law is fully respected by all stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Marc RAVALOMANANA