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His Excellency Andry Rajoelina
President of the Republic of
Madagascar

Antananarivo – Madagascar

25 November 2023

Dear Mr. President,

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa: <https://www.ituc-africa.org/>) writes to express its serious concern regarding the recent wave of attacks on trade union leaders and the suppression of freedom of association in Madagascar. We stand in solidarity with RANDRANA SENDIKALY and the people of Madagascar in demanding the respect for human and trade union rights.

While we acknowledge the release of the arrested trade unionists and workers, we find the recent arrests and detentions of Comrade Ravelonirina Sammy Grégoire, President of the Union of Teaching Researchers and Teaching Researchers (SECES), and Comrade Rakotomanga Barson, Secretary General of the RANDRANA SENDIKALY Alliance, as deeply troubling and representing a serious pattern of violation of fundamental human rights that the Madagascar government is increasingly becoming known for.

These arbitrary arrests and the ongoing intimidation of trade union leaders are a clear attempt by the Malagasy government to silence dissent and stifle legitimate criticism of its policies. The government's actions are not only a violation of continental and international labour standards and human rights laws, but they also undermine the very foundations of a democratic society.

The right to freedom of association is a cornerstone of democracy and is essential for the protection of workers' rights. It is the right of workers to form and join organizations of their choosing, without interference from the government or employers. This right includes the freedom to elect their own representatives, to formulate their own programs, and to engage in collective bargaining.

The recent actions of the Malagasy government demonstrate a blatant disregard for these fundamental rights. The arrest and detention of Comrade Ravelonirina Sammy Grégoire and Comrade Rakotomanga Barson were simply the latest in a series of attacks on trade union leaders and organizations in Madagascar. These attacks are not only unfair, but they are also counterproductive. They will only serve to further alienate the Malagasy people and undermine the government's legitimacy.

ITUC-Africa therefore urges you, Mr. President, to take immediate and decisive action to reverse this course of action by among other things:

Drop all charges against them and against all other trade union leaders who have been targeted by the government.

Take steps to ensure that trade union leaders in Madagascar are free to exercise their rights without fear of reprisal.

Encourage and facilitate the establishment of an inclusive, well-resourced, and functioning national social dialogue mechanism with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) necessary to address and pre-empt disputes.

I also urge you to engage in genuine dialogue with trade unions and other civil society organizations to address the concerns of the Malagasy people. Only through open and inclusive dialogue can the

government hope to address the deep-seated grievances that are fueling the current unrest.

The Malagasy government must uphold its commitment to democracy and human rights. The suppression of freedom of association is a dangerous path that will only lead to further instability and division. I urge you, Mr. President, to take the necessary steps to ensure that Madagascar respects the rights of its citizens and builds a more just and equitable society.

Sincerely,



Kwasi ADU-AMANKWAH
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa

CC:

- I. Ministry of Labour
- II. ILO Country Director – Madagascar
- III. UN Resident Coordinator

