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MADAGASCAR: A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES

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SUMMARY

Since independence, Madagascar has experienced several episodes of political instability. Violent clashes between government and opposition forces in 2009 culminated in the seizure of power by Andry Rajoelina. International condemnation was swift, with major donors such as the US and EU imposing sanctions, multilateral bodies suspending Madagascar's membership and negotiations were initiated by several intergovernmental organisations. Several phases of the peace process occurred eventually leading to the signing of the Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar in September 2011. Very few women were directly included in mediation or at the peace table, but women were active throughout the process in more informal spaces and played key roles in reconciliation processes. Yet, Malagasy women continue to face discriminatory gendered norms in areas of, inter alia, property and inheritance rights, citizenship rights, marital norms and practices, violence against women (VAW), and the feminisation of labour in Export Processing Zones (EPZs).

STRENGTH OF GENDER PROVISIONS

Madagascar Constitution 2010

	0 None	1 Weakest	2	3	4	5 Strongest
Human Rights		✓				
Development	✓					
Post-Conflict Issues	✓					
Violence Against Women	✓					
Participation		✓				
General	✓					

Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar 2011

	0 None	1 Weakest	2	3	4	5 Strongest
Human Rights	✓					
Development	✓					
Post-Conflict Issues	✓					
Violence Against Women	✓					
Participation		✓				
General	✓					



WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION: KEY CONSTRAINTS AND ENABLERS

CONSTRAINTS

1. Absence of gender quotas
2. Feminisation of labour particularly within Export Processing Zones (EPZs)
3. Discriminatory gender norms and practices

ENABLERS

1. Civil society mobilisation around political gender quotas
2. Historical legacy of female leadership
3. Levels of girls' education

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

The Malagasy 2009 political crisis is rooted in Madagascar's difficult democratic transition since independence from France in 1960 and the failure to legitimise and consolidate democratic structures and processes during its tumultuous political history (Cawthra 2009: 13). Since independence, Madagascar has experienced a military coup in 1975, an autocratic and authoritarian military regime under Didier Ratsiraka until 1993, a constitutional crisis in 1996 and a political standoff after the 2001 elections between Ratsiraka and populist newcomer, Marc Ravalomanana.

Eventually Ravalomanana consolidated his administration's power and he and his party, Tiako-I-Madagasikara (TIM), dominated Malagasy politics and the economy until the political crisis in 2009. Former disc jockey, Andry Rajoelina, won local mayoral elections in Madagascar's capital city, Antananarivo, in January 2008. In early 2009, Rajoelina's supporters mobilised an opposition movement against Ravalomanana's government climaxing in a violent confrontation during a protest on the Presidential Palace where 100 people were killed (Cawthra 2010: 14). With President Ravalomanana's position becoming untenable and his eventual loss of support by the military, Ravalomanana was forced to resign handing power over to a military directorate. He then fled to South Africa. Rajoelina ultimately seized power with military and High Court backing forming a self-declared interim government, the High Transitional Authority (HAT, after its French acronym) (Ploch and Cook 2012).

International condemnation of Rajoelina was relatively swift, with major donors such as the US and EU imposing sanctions, and multilateral bodies suspending Madagascar's membership. Negotiations were instigated by several international organisations, particularly the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the EU and UN, who were jointly grouped as the International Contact Group. Several rounds of negotiations ensued between four players consisting of the Rajoelina and Ravalomanana camps, and former presidents Didier Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy. The four major players established self-styled 'movements'. The involvement of the former presidents was an acknowledgement by the international community that the 2009 crisis was caused by previous cyclical conflict and constitutional breaches (Cawthra 2010: 14).

During the peace process, Malagasy women played key roles in reconciliation.

Several phases of negotiations occurred, leading to the signing of an agreement in 2009, in Maputo, Mozambique. The agreement sought to establish an inclusive transitional government. The Maputo Process represented the first coherent response to a history of cyclical political violence. However, it failed to provide clear directives on how to share political power, leaving this to the goodwill of the parties. This resulted in a standoff for controlling political power and resources. Rajoelina failed to adhere to the agreement and formed a cabinet primarily composed of his supporters. Furthermore, a new constitution was announced, primarily aimed at lowering the presidential age limit from 40 to 35 in order to legitimise Rajoelina who was 36 years old at the time.

Opposition leaders and the international community opposed this government, and negotiations resumed producing two further agreements that also failed. Additionally, during this time, Ravalomanana was sentenced in absentia to life with hard labour for ordering the killing of protesters in 2009. In September 2011, Malagasy actors (bar the Ratsiraka camp) finally agreed on the Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar that included amnesty laws that would allow for the unconditional return of all political exiles, including Ravalomanana, elections in 2012 and essentially legitimised Rajoelina as President. Implementation of the Roadmap was fraught and protracted with more political posturing between Ravalomanana and Rajoelina. After numerous delays, relatively peaceful elections were eventually held in October 2013 (Freedom House 2016). Hery Rajaonarimampianina—a former finance minister who was backed by Rajoelina in the elections—was elected President with 54 per cent of the vote, though he broke away from Rajoelina's influence once in power.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS

Though very few women were involved in mediation as 'track one' actors or those directly engaged at the peace table, women were active throughout the process in more informal spaces. There is a long history of the Malagasy women's movement mobilising and intervening to advance gender equality and assist national reconciliation. During the peace process, Malagasy women played key roles in reconciliation. Women's associations and organisations such as the Federation pour la Promotion Féminine et Enfantine, the Vondron'ny MIRALENTA ho an'ny Fampandrosoana (Platform for Gender Equality and Development, VMLF), Ainga 30-50, the National Council of Women of Madagascar and the Network of Women Artisans of Peace lobbied for greater representation and participation of women in all consultative and decision-making bodies created to facilitate peace and security in the transitional process (Razafindrakoto 2015: 448).

The peace process provided organisations such as the VMLF, a network of experienced and emerging female politicians across political parties, the opportunity to articulate priorities concerning women's contribution in resolving the conflict. The VMLF actively called for peace and negotiations among the 'four movements,' through press releases, and ran an intensive campaign advocating 30 per cent of women in decision-making positions by 2012 and 50 per cent by 2015 (named the Ainga 30-50 campaign). The campaign targeted leaders, political parties and civil society (Schanke and Maminirinarivo 2011: 14). The Prime Minister of the transition publicly announced that 30 per cent of his government would be composed of women. However, when the new government was established, only 18 per cent of the ministers were women (Schanke and Maminirinarivo 2011: 14). Nevertheless, the campaign boosted membership from 400 in 2009 to 3,000 in 2011.

The most substantial change in the 2010 Constitution was lowering the presidential age limit from 40 to 35, allowing Rajoelina to stand in the proposed 2011 elections (Iloniaina 2010). The Constitution was passed via a referendum prior to the signing of the Roadmap, where according to the electoral commission, 74 per cent had voted 'yes' with a 53 per cent turnout (Iloniaina 2010).

The Constitution contains weak gender provisions, with little concrete targets, aims or strategies. In its preamble, it acknowledges conventions relative to the rights of women. It advocates for non-discrimination based on gender and equality before the law (Article 6). It states that all nationals, both men and women, can exercise their political and civil rights and 'favours the equal access and the participation of women and men in public employment and to the functions in the domain of the political, economical and social life' (Article 6). Furthermore, it also has weak economic protections: 'No one may be prejudiced in their work or in their employment for reason of gender...' (Article 28). Likewise, the Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar had only two mentions of gender, both in relation to taking into account 'gender balance' when distributing government portfolios and 'gender representation' in establishing and appointing members of transitional institutions (Article 6).

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER CONFLICT

Prior to the colonisation of Madagascar by the French, the island was under the control of the Merina Kingdom and divided among various tribes. Women figured prominently among the Merina monarchs, holding absolute power over the government of the kingdom. For instance, Queen Rahofohy was the Merina monarch who initiated unification of the tribes under one ruler in the first half of the sixteenth century. Subsequently, there was a procession of Queens, where Madagascar was ruled by women during most of the nineteenth century (Altius and Raveloharimisy 2016: 137-

The increase in women's descriptive participation has been made possible by support of women's civil society by international donors.

138). However, the spread of Christianity and European influences led to the ascent of gender norms that saw men, not women, in positions of power and leadership. Western educational, religious and more 'civilised' customs influenced the ways in which women could access leadership and especially education. But the historical legacy of female political leadership, as Altius and Raveloharimisy (2016: 137) argue, sets the precedent that women's involvement in political and social arenas is not a foreign concept.

Although women still face societal discrimination and enjoy fewer opportunities than men for higher education and employment, women continue to be active within the political sphere. For example, Sahara Georget is leader of the Green Party, and Birgitte Rasamoelina was the President of the Association of Women Mayors and the leader of the Women in Politics Political Party - which consists of an estimated five thousand members (Altius and Raveloharimisy 2016: 138). The Association of Women Mayors in Madagascar was founded in 2007, and represents all 64 elected female mayors and is the only national Malagasy organisation of its kind (Norad 2011: 14).

The proportion of women in parliament increased from 17.5 per cent to 20.5 per cent after the 2013 elections. The increase in women's descriptive participation has been made possible by support of women's civil society by international donors (Razafindrakoto 2015: 446). It is worth noting that there was an increase in the number of women candidates contesting the elections as an overall 1,184 women, including 334 main candidates, stood for the legislative elections. Comparatively, 205 women (11.2 per cent) vied for a seat in the National Assembly during the 2007 parliamentary vote (EISA 2013: 42). Despite these descriptive gains in the parliament, women's representation is not mandated by any kind of legal provision, including the active rejection of laws proposing a 30 per cent gender quota. Moreover, the Council of Ministers failed to ratify the SADC's protocol on Gender and Development for the mandated 50 per cent quota of women in decision-making positions. This is illustrative of the lack of concerted effort to include women in politics.

Women are considerably under-represented in decision-making positions, where the overall female representation in 2014 in these posts was four per cent. This is due to the absence of a clear policy and/or text legislating women's representation in decision-making positions as well as a lack of a culture of parity. For instance, despite civil society efforts to support affirmative action initiatives, only six per cent of mayoral candidates were female, a potential indication of the dearth of women's participation in the next election (The Madagascar Coalition of Civil Society Organisations 2015).

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WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER CONFLICT

Women's labour market participation rate is 88 per cent (aged 15-64), compared to men's 91.1 per cent (UNCTAD 2017: 4). Women's participation in agriculture as a share of total female employment was at 83 per cent in 2014, though women are generally paid less than men for the same agricultural work (UNCTAD 2017: 8). The majority of the population live rurally, with seven out of ten people living in rural areas (UNFPA 2014, para 2). Women are less discriminated against in urban areas, where many women own or manage businesses, and hold management positions in private businesses or state-owned companies (USDOS 2016). Women's salaries remain on average almost 30 per cent lower than men's for work of the same value and the large majority of women are confined to 'feminine' domestic orientated occupations such as family care, domestic services, sewing, etc. (SIGI 2014).

Madagascar created Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in 1989, where the major industry is textiles. Women working in this sector are more likely to be young, and are likely to hold a lower educational attainment, consistent with EPZs patterns elsewhere (UNCAT 2017: 17). Although economically active women are predominately located in the informal economy (87 per cent), when working in the formal sector women constitute two-thirds of the total EPZs workforce (UNCAT 2017). Between 1997 and 2003, Madagascar experienced a remarkable expansion of around 150,000 jobs in the textiles sector, with more than 80 per cent of these new jobs being filled by female workers (Avsar and Linoci 2017).

The creation of EPZs has led to the feminisation of labour, where in the EPZ setting, hiring women often means lower wages, weak labour protections, minimal bargaining power regarding working conditions such as overtime, and high turnover of workers. In Madagascar, the turnover rate of EPZs' employees is estimated to be around one fifth every year, while this proportion falls to one out of ten in the private sector (Avsar and Linoci 2017). Furthermore, there is little career progression as men are more likely to be promoted to middle management over female workers, and women are concentrated in low skilled, low waged positions (Avsar and Linoci 2017).

The law in Madagascar upholds women's rights to ownership and there are no legal restrictions on women's access and ownership to land. However, in practice women are rarely landowners, prevented by patriarchal practices and customs, such as those related to inheritance (Rasamimanana 2008).

WOMEN'S CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER CONFLICT

There has been a long history of women's groups mobilising and intervening to advance gender equality, facilitate national reconciliation, and advocate for greater human security. For instance, in March 2015, women from across the 22 regions in Madagascar came together for a Dialogue of Malagasy Women on Reconciliation and Consolidation of Peace. Currently, activism is directed towards bolstering women's participation in politics and other areas of leadership through women's education and empowerment (Altius and Raveloharimisy 2016: 133). The VMLF and the 30-50 campaign have been vital in advancing women's participation in politics and women's political education. The VMLF acts as a support base and campaigns on behalf of female candidates, encouraging its members to vote for these female candidates.

Since the adoption of the Roadmap, associations such as the Federation pour la Promotion Féminine et Enfantine, the Vondron'ny MIRALENTA ho an'ny Fampandrosoana, the National Council of Women of Madagascar and the Network of Women Artisans of Peace have worked tirelessly to demand access, inclusion and participation of women in decision-making created to facilitate peace and security in the reconciliation phase (Razafindrakoto 2015: 448). Supported by the Institute of Security Studies, the Gender, Peace and Security cluster of the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance have been active in organising around peace, security and gender. Furthermore, the women's movement has worked towards the implementation of UNSCR1325, specifically the 30-50 movement established by the Federation pour la Promotion Féminine et Enfantine and the Network of Women Artisans of Peace. In 2012, a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR1325 was developed and is now being verified and adopted (Razafindrakoto 2015: 448).

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