
Let's save malagasy farmers against new threats to their lands

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Platform of the Actors on Land – SIF – and the Collective for the Defense of Malagasy Lands – TANY offer you their greetings and would like to urge you to sign a petition.

LET'S SAVE MALAGASY FARMERS AGAINST NEW THREATS TO THEIR LANDS

The formulation by the current Malagasy authorities of policies and bills shows a trend dangerous for the peasants and local communities rights on their land. The Platform SIF and the Collective TANY – call on for a massive mobilization of citizens around the world and urge you to sign a petition in order that the Malagasy authorities adopt laws which secure the farmers and local communities rights on their lands.

Please sign only once the petition available in four languages by using one of the three links below

<http://terresmalgaches.info/spip.php?article106> (ESP)

<http://terresmalgaches.info/spip.php?article104> (MG)

<http://terresmalgaches.info/spip.php?article101> (FR)

<http://terresmalgaches.info/spip.php?article102> (EN)

Then you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a link starting with [http://terresmalgaches....](http://terresmalgaches.info) on which you have to click in order to confirm your signature.

The Letters of Land Policy and laws quoted as well as few references “to know more” are available in <http://terresmalgaches.info/spip.php?article103> (annexe)

4 October 2015

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LET'S SAVE MALAGASY FARMERS AGAINST NEW THREATS TO THEIR LANDS

The formulation by the Malagasy authorities of policies and several laws involving the use of land by investors risks to organize the negation of peasants and local communities rights on their land.

Contrary to its commitment to **consolidate the Land Reform**, the Malagasy government is actually burying it. In defiance of the general interest, it calls into question the advances made by the land reform. Yet this reform, initiated by the 2005 Land Policy Letter, has enabled a step forward regarding

the heavy heritage of colonization.

In accordance with the principle of private property presumption, the reform recognizes the rights of untitled private property occupants which, for more than a century, have not had the means to easily access the formalization of their rights with land titles. Thanks to the reform, small farmers and rural communities, that represent 80% of the Malagasy people, are considered owners of these untitled private properties, under the management of the municipalities.

The important progresses made through the May 2015 Land Policy Letter, based on the proposal of civil society, mayors and other actors, have raised the opposition of the officers of the State's land services. They have launched an indefinite strike which notably castigated the decentralization of land management and the proposal to entrust the municipalities the management of land reserves dedicated to local development and family farming.

To the detriment of the majority of Malagasy population, the authorities gave in to the corporatist demands of the domains technicians' Unions by publishing the New Land Policy Letter of August 2015.

In fact, the government has not only reneged on its commitment to the land reform but also on the consultation principle extended to mayors and civil society organizations.

At the same time, the country leaders are opening the way wide for expropriation and expulsion of people from the lands they occupy or from where they get their livelihoods, for the benefit of domestic and foreign investors, in the framework of a **Public Private Partnership** (PPP).

A bill that has not been brought to the citizens notice, but that was approved on September 23rd by the Council of Ministers, authorizes the State to commit *"an expropriation procedure and "declaration of public utility" in case of work to be done on land under private ownership and with the owner's refusal to grant a right to the land necessary for the implementation of the PPP contract "(art. 37).*

The Malagasy State, using abusively the notion of "public interest" pushes back the basic rights of the majority of the Malagasy population and offers to expropriate and evict the owners and occupiers who refuse to give up their lands.

The grabbing of Malagasy land is becoming more and more pressing. The Mining Code revision, which has been in progress for months, testifies this. To defend the interests of local communities affected by mining projects, civil society organizations invited themselves in this debate and pleaded for maintaining the existing moratorium on mining permits.

The current government makes the opposite choice. It now triggers the process of transforming the exploration permits into exploitation licenses, the renewal of expired licenses or even issuing of new ones. Without waiting for the finalization of the Mining Code revision, between 250 and 500 permits would be currently processed.

The stakes are huge. The current Mining Code authorizes the assignment of a maximum area of 10 000 km² to a mining company. Under these conditions, 60 licenses with such a surface would be sufficient to cover the entire territory, leaving no room for any other activity such as agriculture.

In addition, through the Investment Code, foreign companies still have the option to buy land through a Malagasy partner or nominee. Several organizations of civil society are calling for the annulment of that provision that breaks an ancestral taboo on lands which are considered sacred in the Malagasy

tradition.

To withstand the threats of expropriation and eviction of the majority of citizens and especially of peasants from their lands, particularly in view of the next session of the Malagasy National Assembly and a meeting of Madagascar's donors scheduled on October 7th, 2015 in Lima, Peru, only the awareness and mobilization of public opinion can influence the land policy in favor of farmers and local communities.

We, Solidarity of the Actors on Land – SIF – and the Collective for the defense of Malagasy lands – TANY - call on the citizens of the world to support the Malagasy local communities in distress and especially farmers, by signing this petition:

**"Mr. President of the Republic of Madagascar,
Mr. Prime Minister,
Distinguished members of the Malagasy government, especially Dear Minister of State in charge of Presidential Projects, Infrastructure and Spatial Planning in charge of Land,
Dear Minister at the Presidency in charge of Mines and Petroleum,
Distinguished Deputies,**

We urge the Malagasy authorities to adopt laws which secure the farmers and local communities rights on their lands, excluding any expropriation and eviction, and to revise any bill and law in force that don't conform to it, according to a process including in all stages civil society and all citizens in the debates and choices"

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The platform "Sehatra lombonana ho an'ny Fananan-tany - SIF " and the "Collectif pour la Défense des Terres Malgaches – TANY" sincerely thank you for your action to influence the land policy in favor of peasants rights.