



Environmental conflicts in Madagascar



▼ Description

Madagascar, a “mega-diverse” country in the Indian Ocean, is one of the richest areas from an ecological perspective as well as in natural resources. As Madagascar is an island, many of the plant and animal species have evolved in isolation, and so it has a high rate of endemics: 90% of the 12,000 species. It ranks with Brazil, Australia, Colombia and Indonesia among the five countries with the largest number of animal species. It is home to 5% of global biodiversity and the second highest number of threatened mammals in the world. But it is also one of the poorest countries in the world. Approximately 92% of the Malagasy population lives below the poverty line in 2013 (World Bank, 2014).

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▼ Legend

▼ Cases

GoodPlanet Holistic Conservation Program by Air France and WWF, Madagascar

: Biodiversity conservation conflicts

Description: In 2008, in cooperation with WWF and the GoodPlanet foundation, the French company AIR FRANCE launched a program to fight deforestation in Madagascar and invested 5 million euros in protecting more than 500,000ha of forest. The so-called Holistic Conservation Program for Forest (HCPF) has multiple objectives: protecting endangered forests, replanting and restoring, creating new protected areas, and training local communities in the principles of sustainable management of their living heritage. The HCPF activities are carried out on 5 WWF sites in moist forest (379,974 ha) and dry forest (126,798 ha). According to the company, this large-scale area represents close to 32 million tonnes of stored carbon that can be preserved by lowering the present rate of deforestation. This should support the AIR FRANCE “Climate Plan” strategy, especially in reducing its CO2 emissions. But the AIR FRANCE Program has been criticized since scientists and some NGOs have revealed latent and visible conflicts in the sites covered by the project. Slash-and-burn agriculture is forbidden in the HCPF areas. And yet, most of forest people in Madagascar currently depend on clearing forest to establish new agricultural land. Also, they depend on forest products for cooking fuel and construction materials. People living closest to the forest also depend, to varying degrees, on forest products for food, medicine, livestock fodder and pasture. In Ifotaka, WWF has developed ground patrols and an aerial surveillance. Peasants who practice slash-and-burn are fined: they have to pay 30\$ and give a zebu (which costs 150\$). This is absolutely ridiculous in a country where average income is around 40\$/month. And if they cannot pay, they risk criminal sanction (6 months to 1 year imprisonment). This situation has increased social conflicts in Ifotaka, and according to local communities, there is an atmosphere of denunciations in this area. Some peasants had to stop traditional agriculture and became workers in the Program “Food for Work” supported by World Food Program. International EJOs like Friends of the Earth and investigative journalists from BASTA! consider it as a human rights issue. They are concerned about the future of forest people in this region. Some local civil society organisations thought the AIR FRANCE carbon offset would benefit local communities. This is a problem of unequal distribution of costs and benefits of conservation. The high costs of verification of carbon storage are also an issue, these are “transaction costs” that benefit expert companies but detract from revenue that could go to local people. Those opposing the project in Amis de la Terre, France, state: “The development of the HCPF takes away entire forest areas from local populations, displaced and that see their means of subsistence reduced. So that a small minority can continue to pollute the planet, we require the world's poorest people to change their way of life: forests and land are no longer natural areas but have become stocks of carbon that must be protected. Worse, to keep an eye on fraudsters, a forest police has been set up: its mission is to track down villagers who clear patches of forest to grow food to feed themselves. Anybody caught in the act risks a heavy fine. If the individual is unable to pay, they are sent to prison. And as if patrols on the ground were not enough, aeroplanes fly above the villages to keep a better eye on them!”

Reactionary Stage: LATENT (no visible resistance)

Mobilizing Groups: Indigenous groups or traditional communities, International ejos, Local scientists/professionals, Other

Ambatovy Mining Project, Madagascar

: Mineral Ores and Building Materials Extraction

Description: Ambatovy is a large-tonnage, long-life nickel and cobalt mining enterprise located in Madagascar. Ambatovy is the largest-ever foreign investment in the country and one of the biggest in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean region. It will soon rank among the largest lateritic nickel mining entities in the world. Actually, the Canadian company Sherritt International incorporated, currently in a joint venture with Sumitomo, a Japanese company, Kores, a South Korean company, and SNC Lavalin, also Canadian, signed an agreement for cobalt and nickel extraction in Ambatovy with the Malagasy government in 2006. The building of the mine and smelter infrastructure was completed in 2011. This included open-pit mine sites and a mill in Ambatovy near Moramanga, a hydro-metallurgical smelter in Tanandava about 10 kms from Toamasina, and a 220 km pipeline that will move the milled ore mixed with water (a slurry) to the smelter. The processing will use sulphur products - some of which are toxic. The concentrated cobalt, nickel and ammonium sulphate will then be shipped to Asian markets from the harbour. The toxic tailings from the process will be stored in perpetuity near the process plant. The project benefits have been well promoted in the media. However, the negative consequences of the construction phase of the project to the health and lives of the affected people nearby reached public attention when a serious accident occurred between February and March 2012 and four people lost their lives.

Reactionary Stage: Mobilization for reparations once impacts have been felt

Mobilizing Groups: Farmers, Industrial workers, Local ejos, Landless peasants, Local government/political parties, Neighbours/citizens/communities, Other

Daewoo Maize and Biofuel Project, Madagascar

: Biomass and Land Conflicts (Forests, Agriculture and Livestock Management)

Description: South Korean company Daewoo Logistics signed a 99-year lease in Madagascar for about 1.3 million hectares, or about half of the island's arable land. It is the largest lease of this type in history and would have supplied half of South Korea's grain imports. The organization Collectif pour la Défense des Terres Malgaches, TANY was established in reaction to the lease (in which monetary compensation for the land was not included) and petitioned the government to first consult with stakeholders before agreeing to foreign land deals. The petition was ignored. The Mayor of Antananarivo (the largest city in Madagascar), Andry Rajoelina, criticized the president, Marc Ravalomanana, for supporting the deal. Rajoelina's administration rose in popularity because of his opposition to Daewoo. In December of 2009 the mayor organized a

series of rallies against the president and the Daewoo deal which escalated into an 'attempted coup d'etat'. Some of the rallies turned violent, stores were burned and looted, and over 100 people died. After three months of unrest President Ravalomanana fled to South Africa and on the 21st of March, 2009, Andry Rajoelina was sworn in as president of Madagascar. Three weeks later he rescinded upon the deal with Daewoo. While this deal is now dead, many smaller land acquisition deals that deny people rights are now being signed and put into operation.

Reactionary Stage: PREVENTIVE resistance (precautionary phase)

Mobilizing Groups: Farmers, Local ejos, Landless peasants, Local government/political parties, Neighbours/citizens/communities, Other

EU Fishing activities, Madagascar

: Biomass and Land Conflicts (Forests, Agriculture and Livestock Management)

Description: Madagascar was the first Indian Ocean country to sign, in 1986, a fishing agreement with the EU. It is the poorest country involved in such agreements with the EU and it retains strong economic links with its former colonial ruler, France, one of the countries which benefits most from these fishing agreements, as evidenced by its large Distant Water Fleets (DWF) present in most agreements. Since 1986, EU quotas increased by 30% while the fees paid by the EU decreased by 20%. Madagascar Treasury Income decreased by 90% from 34,1 Million euro (in 1986) to 3,8 million euro (in 2010) when adjusted for inflation and Malagasy currency devaluation (Source: Le Manach, F et al., 2012). This has been a common pattern in the EU Distant Water Fishing agreements in exclusive economic zones of southern, relatively poor countries.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Fishermen, International ejos, Local government/political parties, Trade unions, Local scientists/professionals

Mainland Mine Analanjirofo, Madagascar

: Mineral Ores and Building Materials Extraction

Description: Since 2010, the Chinese company MAINLAND MINING Ltd, is exploring ilmenite and zircon in the Vatoavy-Fitovinany region, in the south-east of Madagascar. They have got 26,000 carres miniers (1 carre minier = 85 ha) from the Malagasy government. Their area is about 400 km on the coast, from Vatomandry to Farafangana, and it is along the Pangalana channel (river). Actually, the area explored by MAINLAND Mining Ltd is a property of QMM (joint venture between Rio Tinto and Malagasy government). The process was so secretive even if the civil society in Madagascar asked for a real transparency. There are suspicions of corruption of civil and military personalities (US\$100 million given by MAINLAND). Populations in the Vatoavy-Fitovinany Analanjirofo region complained about the lack of explanation and information from the Chinese company and/or the Malagasy government. There was no public consultation, nor an environmental and social impact assessment. Many environmental problems and social conflicts were observed in their sites since 2010: water pollution, fish decreasing, disappearance of bees, deforestation, radioactivity, loss of biodiversity, etc. Local communities, activists and civil society groups, especially the Collectif TANY and the Malagasy environmental civil society organisation ALLIANCE VOAHARY GASy asked to Malagasy government to stop this project.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Landless peasants, Local government/political parties, Neighbours/citizens/communities

Mainland Mine Manakara, Madagascar

: Mineral Ores and Building Materials Extraction

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Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Indigenous groups or traditional communities, Local ejos

Masoala rosewood Illegal logging, Madagascar

: Biomass and Land Conflicts (Forests, Agriculture and Livestock Management)

Description: There is a booming trade in bois de rose, one of the world's rarest trees, even though the logging and export of rosewood from Madagascar is banned. This is a multimillion-dollar industry. According to a report by Tamasin Ford in The Guardian (23 Dec. 2013), the final destination is China. This is the view of Guy Suzon Ramangason, director general of Madagascar National Parks. "There is a network of mafiosi of bois de rose," he said. "Money in this type of network is very, very powerful." He said the wood was first shipped to intermediary countries, where false papers were drawn up legalising the cargo. The precious bois de rose is rapidly vanishing from the island. In 2009, up to USD 500,000 worth of bois de rose was being shipped out of Madagascar each day. There are no figures for the levels it has reached today (in 2013) but it seems to be worse than in 2009. The illegal logging and smuggling of bois de rose in the Masoala and Marojejy national parks in the country's north-east exploded after the coup in 2009. An investigation by two NGOs, Global Witness and the Washington-based Environmental Investigation Agency, documented the illegal harvesting and trafficking of the wood, destined mainly for China.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: International ejos, Local ejos, Local scientists/professionals, Other

MOIL Tsimiroro heavy oil, Madagascar

: Fossil Fuels and Climate Justice/Energy

Description: Tsimiroro is the name of a large oil field in the onshore Morondava Basin of Madagascar found south of the Bemolanga ultra heavy oil field and south of the town of Morafenobe. It is estimated to contain as many as 9.3 billion barrels of heavy oil. Madagascar Oil (MOIL), founded by Sam Malin, is current license holder of the Tsimiroro field. The MOIL blocks contain two field areas that have been under extensive investigation over the years. According to the company, the Tsimiroro Field in Block 3104 is projected to be a conventional steam flood development that will recover 70% of the original-oil-in-place. The Tsimiroro heavy oil project is located very close to the Bemaraha and Ambohijanahary protected area, and near the Tsingy National Park which is also UNESCO World Heritage Site. So, many local and international EJOs and Conservation Organizations are concerned about the environmental and socio-economic impacts of this project. The environmental civil society "Alliance Voahary Gasy" is

mainly concerned about the "steam flood" process and its impacts in terms of pollution.

Reactionary Stage: LATENT (no visible resistance)

Mobilizing Groups: Local ejos, Other

Rio Tinto/QMM Ilmenite Mine, Madagascar

: Mineral Ores and Building Materials Extraction

Description: QIT Madagascar Minerals (QMM), which is 80% owned by Rio Tinto and 20% owned by the Government of Madagascar, has built a mineral sands mining operation near Taolagnaro at the south-east tip of Madagascar, supported by the World Bank. QMM intends to extract ilmenite and zircon from heavy mineral sands over an area of about 6,000 hectares along the coast over the next 40-50 years. This is one of the most ecologically diverse regions of Madagascar, but also one of the poorest and most isolated. Eighty-two per cent of Anosy inhabitants live below the poverty line (US1\$/day) and the regional population is expected to double by 2020. The Rio Tinto QMM project got the 'go-ahead' from Rio Tinto in August 2005 and construction started in January 2006. It displaced local people from their land and requires the removal of rare fragments of coastal forest and heathland found only in Madagascar. Many local people have little or no knowledge of the dramatic changes taking place and the reasons for them. Differences of understanding about the project have already led to conflict and mistrust, which have been further compounded by the lack of communication. The social, environmental and economic upheaval caused by the project affects different stakeholders in different ways. The most important direct negative biodiversity impact resulting from Rio Tinto/QMMs activities is the loss of coastal forest habitat at Mandena, Petriky and Sainte Luce. Approximately 1,665 ha is expected to be lost to dredging, which entails not only clearance of vegetation but also removal of soil and its constituent seed bank. In addition, many social conflicts were identified and observed on the ground. Property prices and rents have increased dramatically along with the cost of food, medical treatment and energy. Inflation has severely affected the livelihoods of most Taolagnaro inhabitants and some long-term residents were leaving town. Just 10% of the Malagasy population hold official title to their land, with most holding customary land rights that are afforded a lower legal status despite having been held for generations. Changes to local property ownership as a result of the project were extended significantly by the measures of the Integrated Growth Poles project and revision of the land laws. This has affected local peoples ownership of their homes, and their ability to own land in future.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

TOTAL & MOIL Bemolonga Tar sands, Madagascar

: Fossil Fuels and Climate Justice/Energy

Description: Bemolonga is a large oil sands deposit in the onshore Morondava Basin in the west part of Madagascar. The deposit was discovered in the early 1900s but was known to locals for centuries. The field is located north of the Tsimiroro heavy oil field and east of the town of Morafenobe. An American entity based in Houston Texas (USA), MADAGASCAR OIL (MOIL), began further investigation in 2006 and the French company TOTAL joined the project in 2008 as a 60% partner. Together, they become the operator and will explore the Block 3102 in Bemolonga which is located approximately 170 km from the west coast of Madagascar. Melaky, the region in the Central Western part of Madagascar, is one of the poorest regions of the island nation. The tar sands deposits adjoin two vital national parks, and also are in the most arid part of the country. Over 100,000 villagers live in the region near Tsimiroro and Bemolonga's proposed and existing tar sand operations. MOIL & TOTALS proposed tar sands operation in Madagascar is potentially one of the dirtiest mining operation its kind in the world, in a region where the local people have few options but to live next to it.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Indigenous groups or traditional communities, International ejos, Local ejos, Neighbours/citizens/communities, Pastoralists, Other

Tozzi Green Ihorombe Agrofuels, Madagascar

: Biomass and Land Conflicts (Forests, Agriculture and Livestock Management)

Description: The biofuel and biomass project with the Italian company TOZZI GREEN in Ihorombe in the Central south of Madagascar is very controversial. Many Malagasy activists and international scholars criticize the secretive process of attribution of the 100,000 ha area which was announced to be given to TOZZI GREEN. They denounce the possible displacement of the population approved by the Malagasy Government. They are also very concerned about the jatropha culture the Italian company aims to develop in this region that is seen by most of the local communities as antinomic with their subsistence activity. Then, on 18 November, 2013, 350 inhabitants signed a petition, which they sent to the local and national authorities asking them to intervene to stop the expansion of the plantations and to prevent their eviction from the areas being targeted by Tozzi Green and by the Indian company Landmark. These grievances come on top of the reports and claims of the inhabitants of the villages of Satrokala, Andiolava, Soatambary and Ambatolahy from whom the Collectif pour la Défense des Terres Malgaches (TANY) received testimonies. They say they have inherited the lands of their great-grandparents who had farmed according to the ancestral customs there. These lands are not titled and do not have boundaries but are customary family possessions dating back several generations. If the State obliges them to give up these lands, their income from cattle raising will be lost. Thanks to this income, they have been able to send their children to school. On December 1 the chiefs received a warning letter from the State not to disrupt the expansion of Tozzi Green. A large part of the population in the Ihorombe plateau is composed of Bara breeders and the open spaces which certain city-dwellers see as "idle land" are the pasture zones of their zebus. Some countries respect and strictly manage these pastoral zones through a Charter or a Rural Code, but the successive leaders and decision-makers of Madagascar have neglected them. At present, of the 8 000 ha already granted, 2 000 ha are allegedly exploited. According to the promotion by Tozzi green, "The project registers 170 permanent employees and approximately 2 000 seasonal workers among which more than 50% are native of the Ihorombe region", but according to TANY, the benefits in terms of employment are miniscule compared to the economic, social and cultural damages being inflicted. TANY is asking for transparency of all the details of the lease. They ask: How many hectares are covered by the current contracts? How are the procedures and the conditions of progressive land allocations for the company formulated? What criteria are used by the Steering Committee to evaluate the results and to decide to approve a new extension? What does the incongruous "2 000 ha still in trial phase" hide? They demand that citizens must be informed about the complete contents of the contracts: which authorities signed them, what compensation is planned? What fate is reserved for the people who live on these lands in accordance with customary laws? All these questions remain unanswered. These questions concern not just the national and local authorities, but all the citizens of all the regions of the island as important precedents are being set for other interested parties who hope to acquire land in Madagascar. Herders' communities are mobilizing for better treatment from State leaders. In October 2012, after traveling to Europe, a high level State authority in charge of land went to Ihorombe to receive a 4x4 vehicle and computers intended for the Domains and Topography services, as a "result of a collaboration with Tozzi Green". Did the visit of this high authority in the region coincide with a new extension of areas allocated to Tozzi Green, increasing the justifiable concern of the populations? Tozzi Green has announced the implementation in Satrokala of a land office that will deliver land certificates on untitled private properties, which has outraged locals. TANY demands a full stop to the intimidation of Ihorombe citizens who dared to ask that the extension of lands granted to the company Tozzi Green be halted. Total transparency of the contents of the contracts signed by the State is urgently needed. In November 2013, news from a local source came in that famine is starting to set in for the communities that lost grazing land to Tozzi Green. Many zebus were killed, there are no more cassavas (because a big area is scraped by Tozzi Green) and the remaining stock of rice is almost gone. [1]

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Farmers, Indigenous groups or traditional communities, Local ejos, Pastoralists, Other

Varun land grabbing, Madagascar

: Biomass and Land Conflicts (Forests, Agriculture and Livestock Management)

Description: The Varun's land grabbing project has its origins in 2009. It was then reported that Madagascar had definitely abandoned an infamous \$6 billion farming agreement with Daewoo Logistics Corp from Korea., but it might welcome agriculture investment in the future. The 1.3 million ha agreement with Daewoo was cancelled by President Andry Rajoelina, in March 2009. Madagascar's former President Marc Ravalomanana had resigned following two months of protests and many deaths. Madagascar's new government was then considering the plans by Varun International, an Indian company, to lease 465,000 hectares of land in the regions of Melaky, Atsinanana and Sofia. An agreement had been actually made between the Indian company VARUN AGRICULTURE SARL and each Association of 13 (thirteen) different plains in the Sofia Region in Madagascar (Bemanevika, Bekapila, Mahatsinjo, Ambohitoka, Mahadroka, Manandriana, Ankaizina I, Ankaizina II, Bealanana, Maevarano, Amparay, Ankobalava, Ampatsifatsy). Following the signature of the convention between the Chief of SOFIA Region and VARUN AGRICULTURE SARL, on 20th December 2008, the project of joint development for the big plain of Madagascar (GPI MAD project) had the objective to promote cultivation and growing of rice, corn, maize, wheat, pulses, fruits, vegetables and other crops growing in the big plain from the estimated 170,900 ha of land in Sofia region. On January 2009, peasants from the Region and 90% of the mayors of these 13 plains were against this project. They refused the obligation to sell 70% of their products to VARUN which would export them. They also refused the very long-term of the contract : 50 years (can be extended to 99 years). While the land grabbing project by Varun has been stopped, the same Indian company has large energy and mining investments in Madagascar.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Farmers, Local ejos

WISCO Soalala iron ore, Madagascar

: Mineral Ores and Building Materials Extraction

Description: China's third-largest steelmaker, Wuhan Iron & Steel Co (WISCO), started exploratory drilling for iron ore in Madagascar's Soalala region in 2011. WISCO paid US\$100 million for exploration permits in 2010 when Madagascar was under a "coup d'état". Nobody knows how this amount, which represents 10% of the annual operating budget of Madagascar, was expended by the Government of Andry Rajoelina (2009-2013). Many Environmental Justice Organizations (EJOs) are very concerned because WISCO obtained the exploration and mining rights of an open-cast iron ore mine in a region where the biodiversity is both exceptional and vulnerable. Actually, Soalala is close to Baly Bay National Park which is known to be the successful alliance between two different biodiversities: terrestrial and marine and coastal ecosystem ecosystem. Baly Bay is the only habitat of the endemic turtle Angonoka, a turtle that does not leave the borders of Soalala. The company WISCO also plans to displace the communities living in this area of 430,000 ha. These local communities are mainly farmers and hunters.

Reactionary Stage: PREVENTIVE resistance (precautionary phase)

Mobilizing Groups: Local ejos, Neighbours/citizens/communities, Recreational users, Local scientists/professionals, Other

WTR Ranobe forest mining, Madagascar

: Mineral Ores and Building Materials Extraction

Description: The Ranobe protected area, which has among the highest endemism of plants and animals anywhere in Madagascar is being targeted by the Australian company WORLD TITANIUM RESOURCES (WTR) that aims to exploit several hundred square kilometers of primary spiny forest. The mining project will last up to 100 years, during the course of its operations consuming approximately 30,000 liters of water per minute. The project is nearing approval by local authorities to begin exploitation in 2014. There is a lot of pressure on the conservation community right now to reduce the size of the protected area to make way for more mining concessions. Aside from the impacts on biodiversity and to the intact state of the forest-marine ecosystem the mine will displace whole villages as it will consume the local population's only water source. In addition vast areas of tombs would need to be relocated to make way for a new road set to cut through the heart of the protected forest. The relocation of tombs is taboo in southern Madagascar but local leaders are seduced into breaking custom and convincing the majority of the rural population to go along with the mining companies plan without knowing or considering the long-term impacts.

Reactionary Stage: In REACTION to the implementation (during construction or operation)

Mobilizing Groups: Indigenous groups or traditional communities, International ejos, Local ejos, Ethnically/racially discriminated groups, Local scientists/professionals

▼ Comments

