

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED JOURNALIST NEEDS PROPER MEDICAL CARE

Fernand Cello, a Malagasy investigative journalist, is facing seven charges including ‘defamation’, ‘endangering state security’, and ‘incitation to hatred’ after he was arrested on Friday, 5 May. The arrest comes after he exposed an illegal sapphire mining site. The company was eventually ordered by the ministry of mining to suspend its operations for contravening the mining code. He was suffering from angina at the time of his arrest for which he needs immediate medical attention that he has not adequately received in detention.

Fernand Cello, an investigative journalist for Radio Jupiter, was arrested on Friday, 5 May. He was leaving a private clinic in Antananarivo where he had spent several days receiving treatment for angina. He has had limited access to medical treatment since his arrest, having been taken to hospital once where he was hospitalised for two days.

Fernand Cello is facing seven charges including ‘defamation’, ‘endangering state security’, and ‘inciting hatred’. It is believed that his arrest, subsequent detention in Ihosy and some of the charges against him may be in relation to his investigative work.

Fernand Cello, whose real name is Avimana Fernand, had been in hiding since December 2016, after having aired a piece in which he accused a mining company and alleged government allies of running an illegal sapphire mine in Ilakaka, South-West Madagascar. The company was eventually ordered by the ministry of mining to suspend its operations for contravening the mining code. A few days after Fernand Cello’s broadcasts, the radio station he works for, Radio Jupiter, was raided by military forces, who confiscated its transmitter. In August 2016, Radio Jupiter was targeted by unknown persons and a local power company turned off its power supply, after Fernand Cello accused them on air of carrying out unfair practices towards their clients.

Please write immediately in French, English or your own language:

- Urging authorities to ensure that pending his release, Fernand Cello is granted immediate access to adequate medical care;
- Calling on them to drop all charges stemming from his legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JUNE 2017 TO:

Monsieur le Ministre de la Justice

Charles Andriamiseza

43 Rue Joel Rakotomolala

Faravohitra - Antananarivo

Madagascar

Email: spminjus@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Son excellence

And copies to:

Amnesty International Southern Africa

Regional Office

Johannesburg

South Africa

Email: tamara.leger@amnesty.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Embassy of the Republic of Madagascar, 4 Avenue Raphael Paris XVIII France, 0033145046211, Fax: 0033145035870, info@ambassade-madagascar.fr

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Madagascar, freedom of expression, particularly concerning the illegal trafficking of natural resources and the environment, remains risky for those who speak out. Clovis Razafimbalala, an environmental activist, is currently in pre-trial detention, after having spoken out against the illegal trafficking of rosewood.

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